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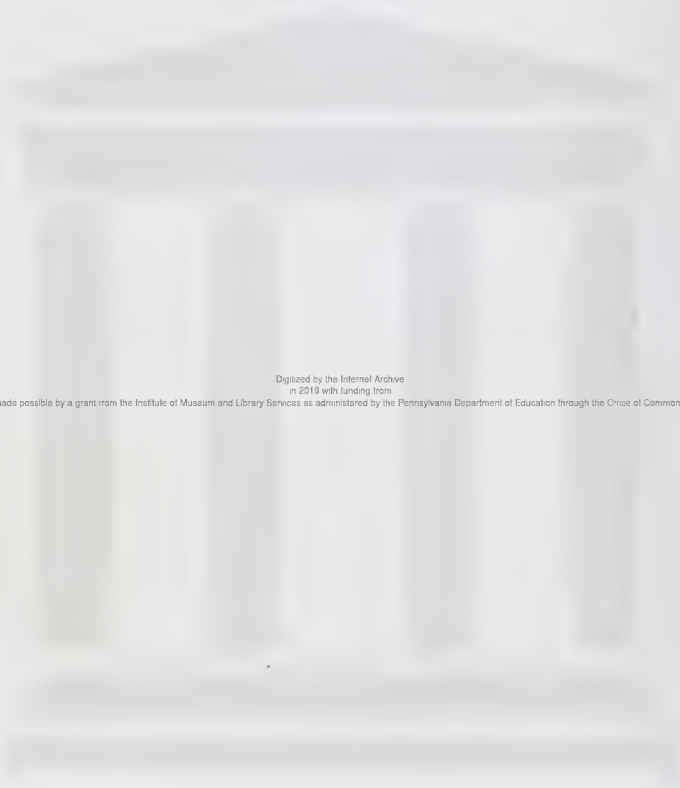

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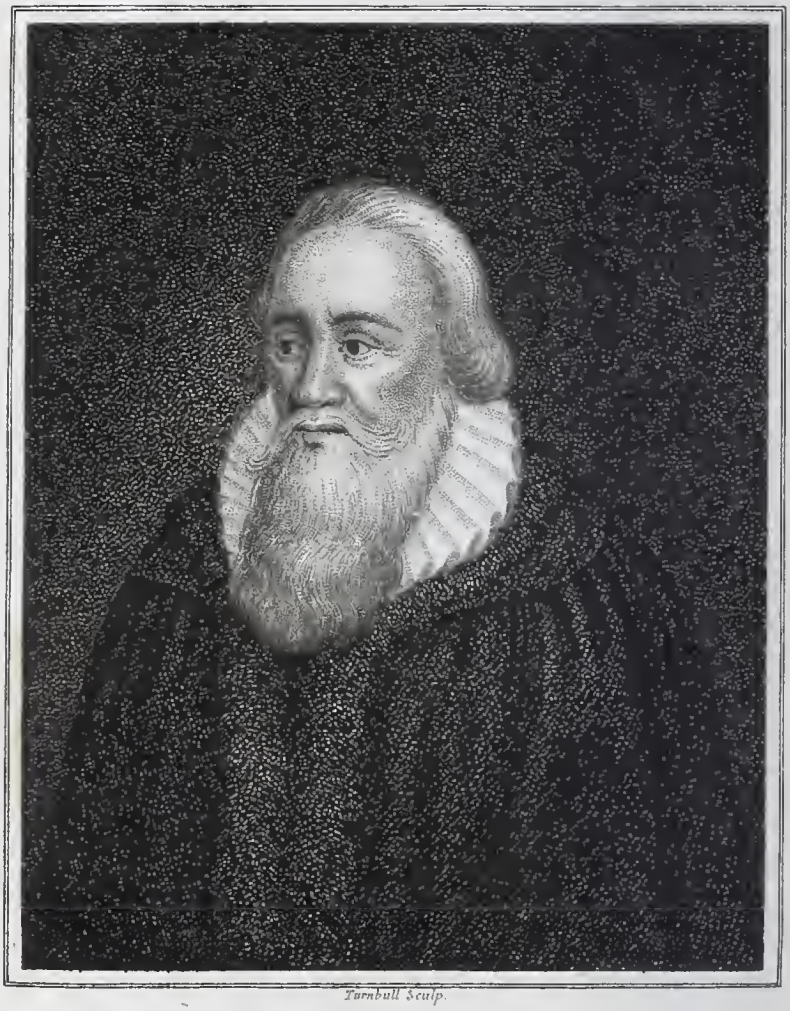
TRUE

CHRISTIANITY.

VOL. I.



Turnbull Sculp.

Rev.d John Arndt.

Author of True Christianity

General Superintendant in the Dutchy of Luneburg.

Born 1555. Died 1621.

Published by Booth & Co.s 5 Duke Street Manchester Square

alt. Martin Taylor

True Christianity;

OR

THE WHOLE ECONOMY

OF

GOD TOWARDS MAN;

AND

THE WHOLE DUTY

OF

MAN TOWARDS GOD.

BY THE VENERABLE

JOHN ARNDT.

EDITED BY

WILLIAM JAQUES,

TRANSLATOR OF PROFESSOR FRANCK'S GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

VOL. I.

London:

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1815.

TO THE

REV. LEGH RICHMOND, M. A.

RECTOR OF TURVEY, AND CHAPLAIN TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE DUKE OF KENT.

Rev. Sir,

IN dedicating this Edition of the True Christianity to you, I am influenced by those respectful and affectionate sentiments, which involuntarily arise in the mind, whenever your name or labours in the cause of Truth are mentioned. You have been long revered, Sir, in the Christian World, not only as sustaining an important situation in our National Church, but on account of your eminent usefulness, and the catholic spirit which has distinguished your career. Your "Annals of the Poor," will long continue to be read with grateful pleasure;

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and ever will your name be associated with the mention of them, as the Friend of Poverty and Youth. *That you may long be spared to edify mankind, by your instructions and example, is the prayer of,*

Rev. Sir,

Yours very respectfully,

THE EDITOR.

London, *May*, 1815.

THE

EDITOR's PREFACE.

THE True Christianity of the venerable John Arndt, has ever held a most exalted rank in the list of religious productions, both on account of its internal worth, and the unparalleled success with which it has been crowned. Boehm, who from his proximity to the time of its publication, and from his German birth and connexions, was well qualified to form an opinion on the subject, observes in the preface to *his edition* of the True Christianity, that "THE EFFECTS WHICH THE WORK HAD PRODUCED IN THE CONVERSION OF THOUSANDS OF SOULS, WERE SUCH THAT TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THEM WOULD MAKE A HISTORY OF ITSELF;" and indeed, it is wholly impossible to take up the volume without admiring the deep wisdom and piety which abound in every page. It should likewise be recorded, that this Book eminently led the way to that celebrated revival of true religion, known in Ecclesiastical History, by the name of Pietism; and was long publicly expounded, by Professor Franck's direction, in his celebrated Orphan House at Halle.*

* See the Life of Professor Franck, written by the Editor, and prefixed to "The Guide to the Study of the Scriptures."

The True Christianity is, indeed, imperfectly known in England, because not having been published for nearly a century, the Book is become scarce, and is confined to the libraries of private individuals. Not a few enquiries had, however, been made for it before the present publication was projected; and the Editor is happy to find that since his Prospectus was issued, those enquiries have been considerably augmented.

It will be proper to add a few words with regard to the present edition of the True Christianity. It was originally intended, agreeably to the suggestion of a respectable theological journal, that the present publication should be an *abridged* edition of the original; but though this was the design, it was never intended to press the work into any prescribed limits. The result has been that though the present piece is an abridgment, the principle of abridging has been applied with great moderation; the object has been to lop off excrescences, and not to retrench the thought or sentiment. Who would venture to do more with such a work as the True Christianity, with such a writer as John Arndt?

But though the original work has been abridged sparingly, let it not be supposed that the present publication has been either hastily or negligently edited. On the contrary, there is not a single page, nor a single paragraph, which has not been subjected to

scrutiny; many parts have been repeatedly transcribed; and several months have been devoted to the review. None but those who collate this edition with that of Boehm, (which has been made its ground-work,) will be competent to judge of the labour which has been devoted to it.

With regard to the doctrinal character of the present work, that man cannot be possessed of a moderate degree of candour who does not judge of the work as a whole, and without reference to those minor doctrines in which our Author may differ from some who read him. I confess that his sentiments, on some points, are not always in coincidence with my own; they certainly were not with those of the revered and learned men, whose names are annexed as recommending the work; and it is probable that there are few Christian readers, whose sentiments on non-essential points will be *precisely* in unison with those of the venerable Arndt.—It need scarcely be added, that the Author's developement of his own sentiments has undergone no alteration in the present edition; and it may be presumed, that in a day remarkable for a *catholic* spirit, none who have influence to recommend a useful work, will be deterred from uniting with Franck, Mosheim, and Spener, in doing this, because those sentiments do not in *all* respects comport with their own.

The True Christianity was originally

written in German, and the *first book* appeared in 1605, and was printed at Iene by Stegmann. The three remaining books were published in 1608. These together may be considered the *editio princeps*. Translations and editions multiplied rapidly. It was printed in Latin at Lunenburgh in 1625; at Frankfort, 1628; Leipsic, 1704; London, 1708. It has been translated, into French, Bohemean, Danish, Flemish, English, Latin, and probably some other languages.

The celebrated PROFESSOR FRANCK, after citing a passage from the True Christianity, in his Lectures delivered at the University of Hallé, gives his opinion of the work in the following terms: "The Meditations of John Arndt, comprised in these volumes, are so richly fraught with deep wisdom and divine unction, that every one who applies his mind to the study of the Holy Scriptures, must derive very important aid from the perusal of them."—Vide Prælectiones Hermeneuticæ, Halæ, 1723.

The learned MOSHEIM, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, (Vol. V. p. 337, 338), speaks of this Work and its Author, in the following high terms:—"The piety and virtue of John Arndt have rendered his name precious to the friends of true religion. His *famous* book concerning True Christianity is still perused with the utmost pleasure and edification."

The great Dr. Spener, the promoter of

that revival of *True Religion,* known in Ecclesiastical History by the name of *Pietism*, mentions this Work *frequently* in his Writings, and *always* with the warmest commendation. " I recommend," says he, " that it be very frequently in the hands of God's people, and that it be read with *diligence* and *meditation*, so as to be converted into nourishment for the soul. Its celebrity daily increases, and if I augur right, it ever will. Would to God, indeed, that we had more such writers as John Arndt."—*Vide Spener's Consilia Theologica.*

Dr. WORTHINGTON, who translated the Christian Pattern of Kempis, calls Arndt " a second Salvian," and considers him as sustaining the same rank in the Lutheran Church, as Thomas à Kempis in that of Rome.

Divines, indeed, of all communions and persuasions, have united in their admiration of this delightful production. The late learned DR. EDWARD WILLIAMS has inserted it in his valuable Appendix to the Christian Preacher; and the REV. JOHN WESLEY made a most copious extract from it, comprised in Vol. I. and II. of his Christian Library.

WILLIAM JAQUES.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE

AUTHOR.

THE venerable John Arndt, was born at Ballenstadt, in the Duchy of Anhalt, in Germany, in the year 1555. After the usual course of preparatory study, he applied himself to medicine; but becoming dangerously ill, he made a vow that should he be restored to health, he would exchange his present profession for that of theology. He recovered, and immediately applied himself to perform the promise which he had made when in a state of sickness. He was successively Minister at Quedlinbourg and Brunswick, in his own country. In the latter city, he underwent severe trials. The success of his preaching excited the jealousy of his brethren in the ministry, who became his enemies, because his zeal condemned their supineness. In order to injure his reputation, they attributed to him a variety of erroneous opinions; and so far did persecution proceed, that he was eventually obliged to quit Brunswick, and to retire to Isleb, whither he had been invited. He was minister of the church in that village during three years.

In 1611, George, Duke of Lunenburgh, who entertained a high idea of the sanctity of this venerable man, presented him to the church of Zell, and made him Superintendant of all the churches in the Duchy of Lunenburgh. He discharged these offices for about eleven years, and died in 1621, aged 66 years. It is said that he foretold his approaching dissolution, mentioning to his wife when he had just delivered his last sermon, that it was his *funeral discourse*.

Some hours before he breathed his last, his mind was much exercised; and he exclaimed, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!" A friend present replied, "He that believeth hath everlasting life." He then fell into a doze, when, suddenly starting, he exclaimed, "We behold his glory." Being asked by his wife, "When?" he answered, "Now; it is that glory which eye hath not seen, neither hath it entered into the heart to conceive." At nine o'clock in the evening, he inquired what time it was? when being informed, he exclaimed, "Now, I have overcome!" and immediately fell asleep in the Redeemer.

Persuaded that the laxity of manners which then prevailed among the Protestants, was the consequence of their taking up generally with a dead and barren faith, he taught that true faith necessarily works by love; that it was preceded by a salutary sorrow; and followed by a renewal of the soul. His enemies maliciously laboured to confound him with the disciples of Weigelius, and the Rosicrusians; and imputed to him some of the errors countenanced by those visionaries.

His favourite writers were Thomas à Kempis, Tauler, and St. Bernard. Luke Osiander, a divine of Tubingen, was his chief opponent; and published a work against Arndt, in 1624, entitled *Judicium Theologicum.* This was answered, in a conclusive manner, by Varenius, a judicious divine, in a piece entitled *A Vindication of True Christianity;* and there were others who powerfully advocated the cause and writings of this holy man. Osiander is said to have seriously repented his having written against him, when death approached.

THE

PREFACE.

OF THE

AUTHOR.

HOW great and detestable the abuse of the Holy Gospel is in these last days of the world, abundantly appears from the manners and conduct of those who loudly boast of Christ, and of the purity of his Word; but at the same time, lead a life as profligate and antichristian, as if they lived not among Christians, but heathens and infidels. This awful state, to which religion is at length reduced, wherein vice, and an empty hypocritical pretence have every where gained the ascendency, has at length influenced me to publish this Treatise; with no other view than that those who are yet piously disposed, and not quite carried away with the multitude, may at least know wherein TRUE CHRISTIANITY consists; namely, in a true, living, and practical faith, exerting its life and energy by unfeigned religion, and suitable fruits of righteousness: the name of a Christian being given us, not only as we *believe* in Christ, but also as we *live* in him, and he in us.

Further, I have undertaken to write this piece on practical Christianity, that it may be seen that true repentance must needs proceed from the inmost centre of the heart: that it must entirely change the mind and affections, together with the other faculties of the soul; and in short, conform the whole man to Christ and his holy Gospel, by forming him every day more and more into a new crea-

ture. As every seed produces fruits of a nature corresponding with the seed whence they spring; so ought also the Word of God to produce daily such spiritual fruits in us as are agreeable to its nature: and we ourselves ought to live constantly in the new birth, after we are once made new creatures through faith in Christ. In a word, the whole design of the book is, to explain how Adam ought to die, and Christ again to live in us: it not being sufficient merely to know the Word of God; but if we know it, it must be also expressed in our whole life and practice.

Many of those that now apply themselves to the study of divinity, suppose it to be a mere notional and speculative science, or a branch of polite learning; whereas it is rather a living experience and a practical exercise of the soul. Almost every one, alas! that engages in this study, does it with no other intent, than to gain the applause of men, and to become great and famous in the world. But how few are there that effectually answer the true end of divinity, which is designed to make us thoroughly good and holy, and to render our own will conformable to the will of God? All are in quest of polite and learned men, by whom they may be instructed in arts, languages, and sciences; but there is hardly one to be met with, that covets to learn from the true and only Teacher and Master, the great lesson of meekness and humility of heart: though it is an undeniable truth, that the holy exemplar of life which he has left us is the brightest pattern and the safest rule to follow, and consequently the sublimest and sovereign wisdom; according to that sentiment of the Poet:

Omnia nos Christi vita docere potest.

In the present day there are men to be found every where, who would be thought ministers of the Gospel and of Christ; but few are willing to be his followers also, or the imitators of his holy life. Thus the Lord has many ministers, but few followers! it is, however, utterly impossible for a man to be a minister and lover of Christ, unless he be also a follower of his life, according to that scripture: "If any man serve me, let him follow me."*

* John, xii. 26.

If a man love Christ, he must also love to copy after his holy life, and to transcribe in his own conversation, the humility of Christ, his meekness and patience, his cross and contempt, his reproaches and insults; though this duty be ever so sharp and afflicting to the propensities of our natural temper. And though we are not likely to express fully the sacred pattern of the blameless life of Christ, whilst we are in this state of minority, yet it is meet that such a state should be loved, and pursued with our utmost efforts. Then surely we live in Christ, and Christ again liveth in us by faith: For "he that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."*

But men are now so far fallen away into an empty appearance of things, that they are more inquisitive about learning, arts, and sciences, than about the love of God itself. They seek to know every thing, rather than to know Christ; though this is a knowledge that "passes all knowledge,"† and exceeds in real worth all the wit, sciences, and arts of men. But, as was observed, no man can be a true lover of Christ, except he be also a follower of the holiness of his life, and the purity of his manners. But alas! so great is the degeneracy of most men in this age, that they are even ashamed of Christ, and of his life; and account the meanness and lowliness wherein he appeared, unbecoming the life and manners of the *so called* Christians. These deservedly fall under that just, though severe reproof of our Lord: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father."‡ And this is the true character of our modern Christians! Fain would they form to themselves such a Christ, as would be magnificent, splendid, wealthy, pompous, fashionable, and conformable to all the airs and humours of the times. But they cannot endure a Christ that is poor and indigent, meek and humble, despised and rejected by a profane world. They care neither to receive him, nor to confess and follow him. But unto such he will answer in that day: "I never knew you."‖ As you have disdained to know me in my humility and meanness; so now I

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* 1 John, ii. 6. † Ephes. iii. 19. ‡ Mark, viii. 38. ‖ Matt. vii. 23.

know you not in your pride and greatness. O terrible sentence!

This profligacy and overflowing impiety of our modern Christians, as it is diametrically opposite to Christ, and to the religion established by him: so it loudly provokes the wrath of God, and has caused those judgments, which begin already to gather fast around us. Almost all the creatures of God, heaven and earth, fire and water, seem to become a weapon for avenging the indignity offered to Christ, by the empty and formal professor of Christianity. Nay, the whole frame and system of nature, moved, as it were, with a just indignation, groaneth under the bondage of corruption, ready to break to pieces at the abounding wickedness of the world. And this must be unavoidably followed by floods of misery, by dearth and slaughter, by devastations and pestilence, and by other contagious and destructive distempers.

Nor will evil stop here. The last plagues begin already to rush in upon us with a violence so uncommon, that men at last will hardly be free from the revenging insults of any creature whatsoever. As it was before the mighty deliverance of the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, when this nation was scourged with most dreadful plagues and afflictions; so it shall be before the last glorious deliverance of the children of God out of this world, that grand and spiritual Egypt. The impiety and unbelief of men shall be visited with unusual, and unheard-of calamities. It is, therefore, high time to enter upon an unfeigned course of repentance, and seriously to set about the work of reformation, by turning from the world to Christ, and adhering to, and living in him, by faith. For those that dwell "in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,"* and secure the interest of their souls, in the midst of a profane and dissolute world. And our Saviour's warning is to the same purpose: "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass."† And that of David: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."‡

In order to prepare thy mind for that saving change

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* Psalm, xci. 1. † Luke, xxi. 36. ‡ Psalm, cxii. 7.

which the Gospel of Christ requires, this treatise will furnish thee with some salutary instructions, and be a sort of guide towards so important a work. It explains both the nature of faith, in order to the obtaining forgiveness of sin; and the saving use of grace, in order to acquire that holiness of life, and that reformation of manners, which are wont to adorn and evidence true faith, whenever it is begotten within the heart. People are greatly mistaken, when they place religion in a mere verbal confession, or an outward show of a formal devotion. It consists in a lively FAITH, attended with most substantial fruits of piety, and with a train of Christian virtues, proceeding from faith, or rather from Christ himself, to whom faith is united. And so, indeed, is it necessary that it should be. For since faith, in itself, is a good altogether hidden from the eyes of men, it is but meet, that it should manifest itself by fruits of righteousness, and hereby become *visible* to the eyes of others. For faith, by its close adherence to, and hearty embracing of Christ, draws from him a profusion of heavenly graces, nay, righteousness and happiness itself.

Whenever this faith is raised into a firm and constant expectation of such benefits as are promised in the Gospel, then faith has begotten *hope*. For what is hope, but a patient and quiet expectation of enjoying, in due time, the blessings that have been promised to faith? The same blessings being, in some degree, attained by faith, and laid out again for the good of our neighbour; then *charity* springeth up from faith, which constantly reflects back upon our neighbour that love which it has received from God. Again, when faith sustains the trial of the cross, and resigns itself quietly to the divine will, we may then conclude, that *patience* is brought forth by faith. But when faith either sighs under the burden of the cross, or returns thanks to God for benefits received, we must then pronounce that *prayer* buds forth from the fruitful stock of a living faith.

Moreover, when the eye of faith beholds God's power on the one hand, and man's misery on the other, it will bow and prostrate itself before the divine majesty; and then we may say, that *humility* is the blessed offspring of the same faith. When again, faith is moved with hearty concern, lest, by any false step, it lose again what it has

received; (or as the Apostle's phrase is, when it "worketh out its salvation with fear and trembling;")* then the *fear* of the Lord proves the genuine product of true faith, and adds the top-stone to the divine structure, so happily raised and carried on in a believer.

From this, I think it is manifest, that all Christian virtues are really the progeny of faith; or, *as it were*, the children which inseparably attend that principle, from which they drew their first breath and motion. I say, if they be but solid, lively, and truly Christian virtues, springing up from God, from Christ, and the Holy Spirit, they then will never be separated from faith. Whence it follows, that no man, without faith in Christ, can perform any work acceptable to God. For, whence arise true hope, sincere love, firm patience, fervent prayer, Christian humility, filial fear of God, but from faith? It is faith that derives all this from Christ, that true and unexhausted fountain of salvation. It receives from him righteousness itself, and all the fruits that are wont to accompany it.

Take heed, however, lest thou intrude thy own works and small beginnings of virtue, or even the gifts of the new life, into the grand article of justification. Before God, there is no account had of any man's work, merit, gifts, and virtues; (though in appearance they be ever so bright and conspicuous;) but only of the all-sufficient merit of Christ, apprehended by faith. But this has been more fully explained in the fifth, nineteenth, twenty-fourth, and forty-first chapters of this First Book; and in the first three chapters of the Second, to which the Reader is referred. See therefore, I say, that the righteousness of faith be, by no means, confounded with the righteousness of the Christian life, springing up from it; but that these two be carefully distinguished from each other; the former being the basis of the latter, and the main hinge on which the whole life of a Christian moves. But then take care also, lest, by any sinister application of this doctrine, thy endeavours after true holiness of life be cooled or lessened. For, wherever a hearty concern for a daily growth in the practice of faith is wanting, there faith itself is wanting also, whose very nature and property is, daily to purify, to change, and to renew the heart. And,

* Phil. ii. 12.

therefore, this work of repentance and mortification must be earnestly resolved upon; it being utterly impossible to enjoy the sweet and gracious infusions of the Gospel of Christ, except a man have tasted before the bitterness of a contrite spirit, and an unfeigned sorrow of heart; according to that of the Lord: "The poor have the Gospel preached to them."*

How shall faith quicken and raise the heart into a newness of life, unless it be first deadened and mortified by serious contrition, and affected with a sorrowful sense of all former sins and transgressions? And, therefore, I would have thee by no means believe, as if repentance were so light and easy a matter as our superficial professors suppose. The sacred writers do not use soft and delicate, but earnest and rousing expressions, whenever they set forth the nature of repentance. The Apostle enjoins on us no less than to mortify the flesh, and the members which are upon earth;† to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts;‡ to be crucified to the world;‖ to be crucified with Christ;§ to present (or offer up) the body a living sacrifice;¶ to die to sin; and to be dead with Christ;** &c. All these exhortations entirely tend to remove far from True Christianity, that softness of mind, which is apt to indulge the flesh in its inordinate lusts and sinful propensities.

Nor do the holy Prophets of old, when they describe repentance in its true and lively colours, use any softer or milder expressions, thereby to palliate the matter. So far from it, they require no less than a *broken heart*, and a *bruised spirit*.†† They will have the heart rent, and not the garments: they will have us turn to the Lord with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.‡‡ But, alas! where is there to be found at this day, so much as the least vestige of such a repentance as this? Christ himself will have us hate ourselves, deny ourselves, and forsake all that we have,‖‖ if ever we would be his disciples. And all these words, full of strength and vigour, are made use of for no other purpose, than to impel us to go forth with power and earnestness against the common enemy of

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* Matt. xi. 5. † Col. iii. 5. ‡ Gal. v. 24.
‖ Gal. vi. 14. § Rom. vi. 6. ¶ Rom. xii. 1.
** 1 Pet. ii. 24. †† Isa. lvii. 15.
‡‡ Joel, ii. 12, 13.—Jer. iv. 8. ‖‖ Luke, ix. 23.—xiv. 26.

souls, who is always striving to slack our hand in the important work of repentance. Of this anxious care and severe contrition, we have a most lively image in the penitential Psalms of David, to which I refer the Reader.—Not to mention here the terrifying menaces of a jealous God throughout the whole Scripture, whereby the sinner is required to bring forth repentance, with all the fruits answerable to it; and this, on pain of being for ever banished from the glorious presence of the Lord. And this sorrow, arising from the law, is necessary, in order to make way for the sweetness and mildness of the Gospel of Christ, which after this toil and labour, will take place in the soul, and by its benign and gentle operations, lead the penitent sinner into a more pleasant and comfortable path. But both one and the other are wrought in us by the self-same Spirit of God, through his word.

This serious, earnest, and internal REPENTANCE, together with the whole train of spiritual graces, the practice of faith, and the works of charity connected with it, is the main subject of the Book here published. For whilst it treats on faith, it cannot but touch also on what is so nearly related to it; namely, love, the first and immediate offspring of faith. Again, what proceeds from Christian love, must needs proceed from faith also, if we trace every thing up to its first source and original principle.

One thing I must notice here. Some of my Readers may, perhaps, take offence at a few passages occasionally interspersed and drawn from the writings of Tauler, Thomas à Kempis, and some other pious and ancient Authors. They may seem, at first view, to attribute somewhat too much to the strength and ability of man in the work of conversion: from which, nevertheless, all my books detract. Therefore, *I earnestly entreat the Reader, to ponder the principal scope of the whole treatise, without stumbling at a few particular expressions contained therein.* The *main scope* of the whole book is no other, than to lay open, on one hand, the secret and abominable depth of original corruption which cleaves to mankind; and on the other, to set forth Jesus Christ as the sole beginning, medium, and end of our whole conversion to God. This twofold consideration, essential to the aforesaid internal *penitence* of the heart, runs through the whole book. As the first will influence us with a profound sense of our

misery and nothingness, and make us even despair of our own strength and ability; so the other branch of this knowledge, will make us ascribe every thing that is really good to Jesus Christ, the great restorer of our happiness; that he alone may be our all and our whole; that he may work all in us, and live in us alone.

May the Lord, by his Holy Spirit, enlighten us, that we may be found sincere and without offence, both in faith and life, until the day of Christ, which is at hand; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God! Amen.

TRUE CHRISTIANITY.

Book I.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Image of God in Man.

THE image of God in man, is the conformity of the soul of man, of his spirit and mind, of his understanding and will, and of *all* his faculties and powers, whether bodily or spiritual, to the original pattern of the Divine mind, and to the perfect standard of that will from which all "righteousness and true holiness" are themselves derived. Such was the solemn declaration of Jehovah: "Let us make man in *our image*, after our *likeness*." Whence it immediately is added,--- "So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him."*

It is evident, therefore, from the testimony of the Divine Spirit, that, when man was created, the Trinity implanted their image in him, in order that the holiness, righteousness, and goodness of God, might shine forth in his soul; diffuse abundant light through his understanding, will, and affections; and visibly appear even in his

* Gen. i. 27, 28.

life and conversation: that, consequently, all his actions, both inward and outward, might breathe nothing but divine love, purity, and power, and, in short, that the life of man upon earth might resemble that of the angels in Heaven, who are *always* engaged in doing the will of their heavenly father. In thus implanting his image in man, God designed to delight and rejoice in him, just as a father rejoices in a child born after his own image: for as a parent, beholding himself, or *another self*, in his offspring, cannot but feel the greatest complacency and delight; so, when God beheld the express character of his own person reflected in an image of himself, his "rejoicing was in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men."* Thus it was God's chief pleasure to be with man, in whom he rejoiced, and rested, as it were, from all his labour; considering him as the great *master-piece* of his creation, and that in the perfect innocence and beauty of man, the excellency of his own glory would be fully set forth. And this blessed communion, our first parents and their posterity were always to have enjoyed, had they continued in the likeness of God, and rested in him and in his will; who, as he was their author, was also to be their end.

It undoubtedly is the essential property of every image, that it be a just representation of the object which it is intended to express: and as the reflection in a mirror is vivid in a degree proportioned to the clearness of the mirror itself, so the image of God becomes more or less visible, according to the purity of the soul in which

* Prov. viii. 31.

it is beheld. Hence God originally created man *perfectly* pure and undefiled; that so the divine image might be beheld in him, not as an empty lifeless shadow in a glass, but as a true and living image of the invisible God, and as the likeness of his inward, hidden, and unutterable beauty. There was an image of the wisdom of God, in the *understanding* of man; of his goodness, meekness, and patience, in the *spirit* of man; of his divine love and mercy, in the *affections* of man's heart. There was an image of the righteousness and holiness, the integrity and purity of God, in the *will* of man; of his kindness, loveliness, and truth, in all the *words* and *actions* of man; of his almighty power, in man's *dominion* over the earth, and inferior creatures; and lastly, there was an image of God's eternity, in the *immortality* of the human soul.

From the divine image thus implanted in him, man should have acquired the knowledge both of *God* and of *himself*. Hence he might have learned, that God, his Creator, was All Things himself, the Being of beings, and the chief and only BEING, from whom all created beings derive their existence, and in whom, and by whom, all things that are, subsist. Hence also he might have known, that God, as the Original of man's nature, was all that *essentially*, of which he himself was but the image and representation. For since man was to bear the image of the divine goodness, it follows that God is the sovereign and universal goodness *essentially*: and consequently, that God is essential love, essential life, and essential holiness, to whom alone, (because he is all this *essentially*) worship and praise, honour and glory, might, majesty, dominion, and virtue, are to be ascribed:

whereas nothing of this appertains to the creature, or is to be given to any thing but God alone.

From this image of the Divine Being, man should, in the second place, have acquired the knowledge of *himself*. He should have considered what a vast difference there was between God and him; that in him, even in his best estate, there was no goodness at all, but only a *resemblance* of that goodness which is God himself. Man is not God, but God's *image:* and the image of God ought to represent nothing but God. He is a portraiture of the Divine Being; a character, an image, in which God alone should be seen and glorified. Nothing therefore ought to live in man, besides God. Nothing but the Divinity should stir, will, love, think, speak, act, or rejoice in him. For if any thing besides God live or work in man, he ceases to be the image of God; and becomes the image of *that* which thus lives and acts within him.

If therefore a man would become and continue to be the image of God, he must wholly surrender himself to the Divine Being, in the most *passive* manner; he must suffer God to work in him whatsoever he pleases; that by denying his own will, he may do the will of his heavenly Father without reserve, being entirely resigned to God, and willing to become a holy instrument in his hands, to do his will and his work. Such a man follows not his *own* will, but the will of God; he loves not himself, but God; seeks not his own honour, but the honour of God. He covets no estates nor affluence for himself, but refers all to the Supreme Good; and so being contented to possess him, rises above the love of the creature and the world. And thus ought

man to divest himself of all *self-property* and *self-activity*, that God alone may be all in him, and work all in him, by his Holy Spirit.

It was in this consisted the perfect innocence, purity, and holiness of man; for what greater innocence can there be, than that a man should do, not his own will, but the will of his heavenly Father? Or what greater purity, than that man should suffer God to work in him, and to do every thing according to his pleasure? Or, what greater sanctity, than to become an instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God? To be without self-will, this is the highest innocency. To resemble a child, in whose breast self-love and self-honour do not yet prevail, this also is the highest simplicity.

Of this entire devotedness to the Divine will, our Lord Jesus Christ, while he sojourned in our world, was a *perfect* example. He sacrificed his own will to God his Father, in blameless obedience, humility, and meekness; readily depriving himself of all honour and esteem, of all interest and self-love, of all pleasure and joy; and leaving God alone, to think, speak, and act, in him, and by him. In short, he invariably made the will and pleasure of God his own, as the Divine Being himself testified by a voice from Heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

The Lord Jesus Christ, blessed for ever, is the *true Image* of God, in whom nothing appeared but God himself, and such manifestations as are agreeable to his nature; namely, love, mercy, long-suffering, patience, meekness, gentleness, righteousness, holiness, consolation,

* Matt. iii. 17.

life, and everlasting blessedness: for by him, the invisible God was willing to be discovered and made known to man. He is indeed the image of God in a more sublime sense; that is, according to his *Divinity*, by virtue of which, he is himself very God, the express and essential image of his Father's glory, in the infinite splendour of the uncreated light. But of this, no more can at present be said: our design being to speak of him only as he lived and conversed in his holy *humanity*, while he tabernacled upon the earth.

It was in such a holy innocence as this, that the image of God was, in the beginning, conferred on Adam, which he should have preserved in true humility and obedience. Sufficient it surely was for him, that he was made capable of all the benefits of the divine image; of sincere and unmixed love and delight; of undisturbed and solid tranquillity of mind; of power, fortitude, peace, light, and life. But not duly reflecting that he himself was not the *chief good*, but merely a mirror of the Godhead, formed purposely to receive the reflection of the divine nature, he erected himself into a *God;* and thus, chusing to be the highest *good* to himself, he was precipitated into the greatest of all evils, being deprived of this inestimable image, and alienated from that communion with God, which, by virtue of it, he before enjoyed.

Had *self-will*, *self-love*, and *self-honour*, been excluded, the image of God could not have departed from man, but the Divine Being would have continued to be his sole glory, honour, and praise. As every thing is capable of its like and not of its contrary, and in its like acquiesces

and delights, so man being in the similitude of God, was thereby prepared to receive God into himself, who was also ready to communicate himself to man, with all the treasures of his goodness; goodness being of all things the most communicative of itself.

Finally, man ought to have learned from the image of God, that it is by means of it he is united to God; and that in this union, his true and everlasting tranquillity, his rest, peace, joy, life, and happiness alone consist. He should have learned that all restlessness of mind and vexation of spirit, arise from nothing but a breach of this union, by which he ceases to be the image of God; for man no sooner turns to the creature, than he is deprived of that eternal good which is to be derived from God alone.

CHAP. II.

Of the Fall of Adam.

The fall of Adam was disobedience to God, by which man turned away from the Divine Being to himself, and robbed God of the honour due to him alone, in that he *himself* thought to be *as God*. But while he thus laboured to advance himself, he was stripped of that divine image, which the Creator had so freely conferred on him; divested of his hereditary righteousness; and bereaved of that holiness with which he was originally adorned; becoming as it regards his *understanding*, dark and blind; as

to his *will*, stubborn and perverse; and as to all the powers and faculties of the soul, entirely alienated from God. This evil has infected the whole mass of mankind, by means of a fleshly generation; and, has continued to pass into all, not without a certain necessity of nature. The obvious consequence arising from this is, that man is become spiritually dead and the child of wrath and damnation, until redeemed from this miserable state by Jesus Christ.

Let not then any who are called Christians, deceive themselves with regard to original sin. Let them be cautious, how they attempt to extenuate or lessen the transgression of Adam, in whom they are fallen, as though it were a small sin, a thing of little consequence, and, at the worst, but the eating of an apple. Let them rather be assured, that the guilt of Adam was that of Lucifer, *he would be as God*: that it was the same most grievous, heinous, and hateful crime in both; the same wicked apostasy, the same abandoned treason, the same tyrannical, affecting, and usurping of the rights of the divine majesty.

This apostasy, (for it was nothing less,) was, at first, generated in the heart; and being "conceived" there, was, by the eating of the forbidden fruit, "brought forth." Man, though numbered with the sons of God; though he came forth from the hands of the Almighty spotless both in body and in soul, and one of the greatest master-pieces of beauty in the creation; though, to crown all, he was not only a son, but the *delight* of God; yet not knowing how to rest satisfied with these high privileges, he was for invading Heaven, that he might be yet higher; and nothing less would suffice him,

than to exalt himself into a God. Hence, he conceived in his heart enmity and hatred against the Divine Being, his Creator and Father, whose throne he foolishly began to affect, and whom, had it been in his power, he was disposed utterly to ungod and undo. Who could commit a sin more detestable than this? or, what greater abomination is there, that it was possible to meditate?

Hence it was, that man became inwardly like the Devil himself, bearing his likeness in body and in mind; since both had now sinned the same sin, and committed the same crime, being traitors against the majesty of Heaven. Man no more exhibits an image of God, but the portraiture of the Devil; he no longer is an instrument in the hands of God, but is become an organ of Satan, and is thereby rendered capable of every species of diabolical wickedness: so that, having lost that image which was heavenly, spiritual, and divine, he is altogether earthly, sensual, brutish, and even devilish. For the Devil, designing to imprint his own image upon man, fascinated him so entirely by a train of enticing and deceitful words, that man permitted him to sow that hateful seed in his soul, which is hence termed the seed of the serpent; and by which is chiefly meant, self-love, self-will, and the ambition of being as God. On this account it is, that the Scriptures, (and not without ground,) term those who are intoxicated with self-love, "a generation of vipers;"* and all those who are of a proud and devilish nature, "the seed (progeny) of the serpent." So the

* Matt. iii. 7.

Almighty, addressing the serpent, says, "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed." *

From this seed of the serpent nothing but deadly and horrible fruit can possibly proceed. As in every natural seed, how minute soever it may be, there is contained, in a most wonderful and hidden manner, the nature and properties of the future plant, all its parts and proportions, its branches, leaves, and flowers, *in miniature*; so in that seed of the serpent, Adam's self-love and disobedience, (which has passed into all his posterity by a fleshly generation,) there lies, as it were in embryo, the tree of death, with its branches, leaves, and flowers, and those innumerable fruits of unrighteousness which grow upon it. In short, the whole image of Satan, is secretly traced out there, with all its marks, and characters, and properties.

If we observe the infant in the arms of its mother, we shall see how this natural corruption displays itself from the cradle, and the womb itself; and how self-will and disobedience especially discover themselves, and break forth into actions that effectually witness to the hidden root from which they spring. Let us consider the child further, as it grows up to maturer years. Observe the natural selfishness of the youth, his inbred ambition, his thirst after worldly glory, his love of applause, his pursuit of revenge, and his proneness to deceit and falsehood. And now "a troop cometh." Soon may be discovered in him, vanity, arrogance, pride, blasphemy, vain oaths, awful curses, frauds, scepticism, infidelity, contempt of God and his

* Gen. iii. 15.

holy word, and disobedience to parents and magistrates: wrath and contentiousness; hatred and envy; revenge, and murder, and all kinds of cruelty; especially if outward occasions offer themselves, and call forth into action this latent and deadly seed, and the various evils of a depraved nature.

In proportion as such occasions continue to present themselves, we shall observe the appearance of other vices; wantonness, polluting thoughts, lewd imaginations, obscene discourses, lascivious gestures, and all "the works of the flesh:" we shall behold drunkenness, rioting, and every species of intemperance; fickleness, excessive delicacy, and all that can please the appetite, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. And besides these, there may soon be discovered, covetousness, extortion, chicanery, sophistry, imposture, and every description of sinister practice; together with knavery, over-reaching in trade, stock-jobbing, &c. and, in short, the whole troop or rather army of sins, villainies, and crimes, which are so various and so many, that it is impossible to recount or declare the number of them; according to that scripture of the prophet Jeremiah, "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" And if to those already enumerated, there be added, in the last place, the seducing and false spirits; then, may be observed schisms in the church, wicked and dangerous heresies, yea, the abjuring of God and Christ; the denial of the faith, hatred and persecution of the truth, and even the sin against the Holy Ghost, with every kind of corruption in doctrine, perversion of the scripture, and strong delusion. Now what are all these, but the image

of Satan, and the fruits of the serpent's seed sown in man?

Who could ever have supposed that such a depth of wickedness and depravity could be found in a weak and helpless infant; that so venomous a principle, so corrupt a heart, lay hid in a babe apparently so innocent? Who, I repeat it, could possibly have believed this, had not man himself by his sinful and abominable life, by the imaginations of his thoughts, (being "only evil continually," and desperately bent on what is bad,) of his own will, brought it to light, and expressed, from his childhood, what was before concealed as in a seed?

Oh! most vile and most accursed root! from which springs the tree of evil, fruitful in the production of every kind of plague. Oh seed of the serpent, most hateful, most dreadful! from which an image at once so deformed and foul is generated; and which continually enlarges itself, as it is excited by outward temptations and by the scandals of the world. Full well might the blessed Jesus so cautiously and strictly forbid, that any, by bad example, should offend little children; knowing that the seed of the serpent lurks in them, as the deadly poison in the venomous worm, ready to break forth into open acts of sin, whenever an occasion presents itself.

Learn then O man! to know the sin of Adam thy father, and the source of that corruption which has infected mankind. Learn, if thou art wise, to discern it in thyself. Examine it, not slightly and carelessly, but deeply; and as the importance of the matter deserves. For this infection is greater, this depravation deeper and more deadly, than can possibly be expressed by

words, or even conceived in idea. "Know thyself!" and deeply consider what thou art, O man, since the apostasy of thy first father; how thou who wast in the image of God, art become the image of Satan, an epitome of the devilish nature, and conformed to Satan himself in all malice and ungodliness. For as in the image of God, all the divine virtues and properties are contained, so in the image of the Devil which man, by turning himself from God has contracted, all the diabolical vices and properties are to be found, and the very nature of the Devil himself.

Again, as man, before the fall, bore the image of the heavenly Adam, that is, was altogether heavenly, spiritual, and divine; so, since the first apostasy, he carries about with him the image of the earthly Adam, being inwardly earthly, carnal, and bestial. Lo! he is become as one of the beasts of the field. For what, O fallen man, is thy wrathfulness? and to whom does it more properly belong, to the lion or to man! And for thine envy and thy greediness, do not these betray in thee the nature of the dog and of the wolf? And with regard to thy uncleanness and gluttony, are not these evidences that thou carriest a swine within thee?

Didst thou indeed but rightly examine thine own breast, thou wouldst there discover a world of unclean and noxious beasts. Even in the tongue, that "little member," there may be found, according to St. James, a lake of pestilential and creeping things, a hold of every foul spirit, the cage of every filthy and hateful bird, and, in a word, a "world of iniquity."* Often, alas!

* James iii. 6.

do we make such progress in wickedness, as to surpass in wrath and fury, the beasts of prey; in ravenousness and violence, the wolf; in subtility and cunning, the fox; in malice and virulence, the serpent; and in filthiness and obscenity, the swine. Hence it was, that our Lord termed Herod a fox, and the unholy in general dogs and swine; to whom that which is holy should not be given.

Whosoever, therefore, fails to correct this hateful corruption of nature, by being *renewed* in Christ Jesus, but dies in the state which has been described; such a one must retain for ever, this his bestial and Satanical nature. He must be arrogant, haughty, proud, and devilish, throughout eternity. And when he shall have neglected the time of his purification here, he shall bear about with him the image of Satan in the blackness of darkness, for ever; as a testimony, that while he was in the world, he did not live in Christ, nor was renewed after the image of God. "For without are dogs and sorcerers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."*

CHAP. III.

Of Man's Recovery by Christ.

THE *New Birth* is a work of the Holy Ghost, by which man, of a sinner, is made righteous; and from being a child of damnation and wrath, is made a child of grace and salvation. This

* Rev. xxii. 15.

change is effected through faith and the word of God; and by it, the heart, and all the powers and faculties of the soul, (more particularly the understanding, will, and affections,) are renewed, enlightened, and sanctified in Christ Jesus, and are fashioned after his express likeness. It consists of two principal parts; the one called justification, and the other, sanctification. The apostle speaks of them both, in the following scripture:—"The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."*

The birth of every real Christian is therefore two-fold. The first "after the flesh," the second, "after the spirit;" the first from beneath, the second from above; the first natural and earthly, but the second supernatural and heavenly. The one is carnal, sinful, and accursed, as descending from the first Adam by the seed of the serpent, after the similitude and image of the Devil; and by this, the earthly and carnal man is begotten. The other, on the contrary, is spiritual, holy, and blessed, as derived from the second Adam, after the likeness of the Son of God: and by this, is propagated the heavenly and spiritual man, the seed and image of God.

There is therefore a *two-fold* generation and descent; and, consequently, *two* men, as it were, in one and the same person. These two, every real Christian carries about with him; the fleshly lineage descending from Adam, and the

* Titus iii. 4, 5.

spiritual lineage derived from Christ, through faith: for as the old birth of Adam is in man by nature, even so must the new birth of Christ be in him by grace. This is the old and new man, the old and new birth, the old and new Adam, the earthly and heavenly image, the flesh and the spirit, Adam and Christ in us, and also, the outward and inward man.

Let us now proceed to notice how we are regenerated by Christ. As the old birth is propagated carnally from Adam, so the new birth is spiritually propagated from Christ, through the word of God. This word is the seed of the new creature: for we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."* And again, "of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures."†

The word of God produces faith; and faith again apprehends the word of God, and in that word embraces Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, by whose spiritual efficacy and virtue man is regenerated or born again. In other words, regeneration is effected, in the first place, by the *Holy Ghost;* and this is what Christ means by being "born of the spirit;"‡ secondly, by *faith;* whence it is said,—"whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;"§ and thirdly, by *baptism*, according to that scripture, "except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."¶

In Adam, man inherited the chief evils; as

* 1 Peter i. 23. † James i. 18. ¶ John iii. 5.
‡ John iii. 5. § 1 John v. 1.

sin, divine wrath, death, Satan, hell, and damnation; but in Christ, he is again restored to the possession of the chief blessings, as righteousness, grace, blessing, power, a heavenly life, and eternal salvation. From Adam, man receives a carnal spirit, and is subjected to the rule and tyranny of wicked spirits; but from Christ, he obtains the Holy Spirit, with His gifts, together with an inward kingdom of peace and joy. From Adam, man has derived an arrogant, proud, and haughty spirit; but if he would be born again and renewed in his mind, he must receive from Christ, by faith, a humble, meek, and single spirit. From Adam, we inherit an unbelieving, blasphemous, and most ungrateful spirit; and it is our duty to obtain from Christ a believing spirit, that will prove faithful, acceptable, and well pleasing to God. From Adam, a disobedient, violent, and rash spirit is entailed on us; but from Christ, we imbibe, through faith, the spirit of obedience, gentleness, and modesty, and the spirit of meekness and moderation.

Further, from Adam, we, by nature, possess the spirit of wrath, enmity, revenge, and murder; but from Christ, we, by faith, acquire the spirit of long-suffering, love, mercy, forgiveness, and universal goodness and benignity. From Adam, man, by *nature*, inherits a covetous heart, a churlish, merciless spirit, that seeks only to profit self, and grasps at that which is the right of another; but from Christ, is obtained, by *faith*, the spirit of mercy, compassion, generosity, and mildness. From Adam, proceeds an unchaste, unclean, and intemperate spirit; but from Christ, a spirit of chastity, purity, and temperance, may be recovered.

From Adam, there is communicated to man a spirit full of calumny and falsehood; while, on the other hand, he, from Christ, acquires the spirit of truth, of constancy, and of integrity. Lastly, we receive from Adam, a brutish and earthly spirit; and from Christ, a spirit from above, which is altogether heavenly and divine.

Hence, it behoved Christ to take upon himself our nature, and to be conceived and anointed by the Holy Ghost, in order that we might all receive of his fulness. Hence it was requisite that "the spirit of the Lord should rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of council and might, and the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord;"* that so the human nature might in him and by him be restored and renewed, and that we, in him, by him, and through him, might become new creatures. This is accomplished by receiving from Christ, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, for the spirit of sottishness and folly; the spirit of counsel, for that of madness; the spirit of might, for that of cowardice and fear; the spirit of knowledge, instead of our natural blindness; and the spirit of the fear of the Lord, instead of the spirit of impiety and infidelity.

It is in this heavenly change that the new life and the new creation within us alone consist. For as, in Adam, we are all spiritually dead, and incapable of performing any works, except those of death and darkness; so, in Christ, we must be raised again to the works of light and life. As, by a *carnal generation*, we have inherited the sin of Adam; so, by *faith*, we must inherit

* Isa. xi. 2.

the righteousness of Christ. As, by a fleshly descent from Adam, pride, covetousness, lust, and all kinds of impurity, are entailed upon us; so by the spirit of Christ, our nature ought to be renewed, and all pride, covetousness, lust, and envy, mortified within us. And thus is it necessary that we should, from Christ, derive a new spirit, heart, and mind; as we drew from Adam a carnal mind, and a heart enslaved by vanity and sin.

With reference to this great work of regeneration, Christ is called "the everlasting Father;"* and we are renewed in him to life eternal, being here regenerated into his likeness, and made by his spirit new creatures. And if our works ever prove acceptable in the sight of God, they must spring from this principle of the new birth; that is, from Christ, his spirit, and an unfeigned faith. Henceforth we must live in the new birth, and the new birth in us; we must be in Christ, and Christ in us; we must live in the spirit of Christ, and the spirit of Christ in us.

This regeneration and its attendant fruits, is described by St. Paul, as the being "renewed in the spirit of our mind," "putting off the old man," and the being "transformed into the image of God." He likewise considers it as the being "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us," and "the renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is termed by Ezekiel, "taking away the stony heart, and giving a heart of flesh." Hence it appears, how the regeneration of man proceeds from the blessed incarnation of Jesus Christ. As man, by ambition, pride, and disobedience, turned himself from God; so

* Isa. ix. 6.

his apostasy could not be expiated and removed, but by the extreme humility, lowliness, and obedience of the Son of God. And as Christ, when upon earth, was most humble in his conversation among men, so it is necessary, O man! that he should be the same in thee; that he should dwell in thy soul, and restore the image of God so long effaced.

And now, O man! contemplate the perfectly amiable, lowly, obedient, and patient Jesus, and learn of him; live as he lived, yea, live in him, and tread in his steps. For what was the cause of his living upon earth?—It was that he might become thy example, thy mirror, thy book, and the rule of thy life. He, he only, is the rule of life, and the pattern which every Christian should strive to imitate. It is not the rule of any *man* whatsoever. There is but one example,—Christ; and him, the Apostles have, with one consent, set before us for our imitation. And in the same manner are we called to view his passion, death, and resurrection; even that thou, O man! shouldest *with* him, die unto sin; and in him, with him, and by him, spiritually rise again, and walk in newness of life, "even as he also walked."

Thus may we see, how our regeneration arises from the passion, death, and resurrection, of our gracious Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Hence, St. Peter saith, "God hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*" And all the Apostles will everywhere be found to lay the foundation of repentance and of a new life, in the passion of Christ. St. Peter, indeed, gives

* 1 Pet. i. 3.

this express charge; "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;"* in which we may observe, that the ransom paid for our redemption, is urged as the motive to a holy conversation. The same Apostle tells us, likewise, that "Christ his own-self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness;"† and Jesus himself has said, "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name."‡

It is evident, therefore, that from the passion and death of Christ, proceed both the satisfaction made for our sins, and the renewing of our nature by faith; the one outwardly, and the other inwardly: and that they both are necessary to the redemption and renovation of fallen man. The latter, as well as the former, is the blessed effect of Christ's passion. This alone is the evangelical way, by which we are born again, born from above, and renewed in Christ. Nor does the washing of regeneration in baptism, produce any other effect; for we are thereby baptized into the death of Christ; that dying with him unto sin by the power of his death, we might also rise again from sin, by the power of his resurrection.

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* 1 Pet. i. 17, 18. † 1 Pet. ii. 24. ‡ Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

CHAP. IV.

Of true Repentance and Conversion.

REPENTANCE is the work of the Holy Spirit, under the influence of which, man, through the *law*, acknowledges his sin, and the wrath of God provoked against it; and earnestly mourns his offences: and then, understanding, through the *gospel*, the grace of God by faith in Christ Jesus, he obtains the remission of all his sins. By this repentance, the mortification and crucifying of the flesh, and of all carnal lusts and pleasures, is carried on; together with the quickening of the spirit, or the resurrection of the new man in Christ. Under the exercise of repentance, therefore, the old Adam, with his corruptions, dies within us; and Christ lives in us, by faith: for we must be aware, that these two are inseparately connected. The resurrection of the spirit follows the mortification of the flesh; and the quickening of the new man, destroys and annihilates the old man; the ruin of one, is the life and resurrection of the other. "Though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."* We are, therefore, enjoined, to "mortify our members which are upon the earth;"† and to "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."‡

* 2 Cor. iv. 16. † Col. iii. 5. ‡ Rom. iv. 11.

Let us, however, consider more attentively, why the flesh is thus to be mortified; and why the whole body of sin is at last to be destroyed. It has been remarked,* that, by the fall of Adam, man became earthly, carnal, and devilish; without God, and without love: for being without God, he was also without love; by which, God is pleased to denominate himself. Man was now turned from the love of God, to the love of the world, and especially of himself; so that in every situation, and under all circumstances, he now studies, favours, flatters, counsels, and applauds himself; and provides only for his own interest, honour, and glory. All this is the consequence of Adam's fall; who, while meditating how he might erect himself, as it were, into *a God*, was involved, together with all his posterity, in the same awful sin and perdition. This depravation of human nature must of necessity be entirely removed: and this can be effected only by serious repentance; by divine and unaffected contrition; by a faith that apprehends the remission of sin; by the mortification of sensual pleasure; and by the crucifixion of pride and self-love.

True repentance indeed, consists not in putting away gross and open sins only; but it requires that a man should enter his heart, and search into its inmost recesses. The secret parts, the windings and the turnings of iniquity are to be laid open; in order that the returning sinner may be thoroughly renewed, and, at length, converted from the love of himself, to the love of God; from the love of the world, to a life of spirituality; and from a participation of earthly pomps

* Chap. II.

and pleasures, to a participation of the merits and virtues of Christ; by means of faith in his word, and the imitation of his example.

Hence it follows, that a man must deny himself; that is, he must mortify his own will, and suffer himself to be entirely led by the will of God. He must no longer love, seek, and esteem himself; but he must account himself the unworthiest of all creatures. He must renounce all he has for the love of Christ; and trample on the world, its pomps and its vanities. He must pass by his own wisdom and natural endowments, as though he beheld them not; he must confide in no creature but God alone; yea, he must "hate his own life;" his carnal will and pleasures; his pride, covetousness, lust, wrath, and envy. He must not please, but rather displease himself; he must assume nothing on account of what he possesses; nor must he attribute any thing to his own strength or ability. In a word, he must be crucified to the world; to the lust of the eyes and flesh, and to the pride of life. This, and this alone, is that true repentance and mortification of the flesh, without which no man can ever be a disciple of Jesus Christ. This only is conversion from self, the world, and the devil, unto God; without which, no one can receive remission of sins, nor attain salvation. This is the true cross and yoke of Christ; that of which the Saviour spoke when he said,—"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."* As if he had said, "thy self-love and ambition must be removed by earnest and inward humility, of which thou hast an example in me; and by the

* Matt. xi. 29.

example of my meekness, must thy wrath and desire of revenge be subdued." This, to the new man, is an easy yoke and a light burthen; though, to the old nature, it may seem to be a most bitter and afflictive cross. This is to crucify our own flesh, with the affections and lusts. (Gal. v. 24.)

They, therefore, who are acquainted with no other cross than the tribulations and afflictions of this life, greatly err; being ignorant of that true cross, which we ought to bear after our Lord daily; namely, inward repentance, and the mortification of the flesh; submitting to our enemies with great patience; and overcoming the malice of slanderers by humility and mildness, after the pattern which the Lamb of God has left us. For it becomes us, to follow the example of Christ, who renounced all worldly splendour and glory, interest and power, fame and applause, and every thing that is commonly esteemed great and noble.

This yoke of Christ is the real cross; which when a man bears, he then truly dies to the world. It is not to retire into monasteries and cloisters, nor to form a set of rules and orders for the regulation of life; for while the heart remains disordered, and the love corrupt; while the man is puffed up with spiritual pride, and a pharisaical contempt of others; while he is devoted to lust, envy, hypocrisy, secret hatred and malice; he does not die to the world, but altogether lives to it. This is not the Christian yoke, nor is it the cross of Christ: but these consist in mortifying the flesh, with its sinful propensities; in turning away from the world, to God; in an inward and secret sorrow for daily imperfections; a constant dying to the world,

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and living to Christ by faith; in following his steps with sincere lowliness and humility; and in confiding only on the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

To this unfeigned repentance, this true and inward conversion from the world unto God, hath our blessed Lord called us. The imputation of his righteousness and obedience, together with the remission of all our sins, apprehended by faith, is promised to it alone. If we are destitute of repentance, Christ profiteth us nothing; for we cannot then become partakers of his grace and favour, nor of the efficacy of his merits; becausc these can be applied only with a contrite, penitent, lowly, and believing heart. And truly this is the fruit of the passion of Christ in us, that we die to sin by a sincere repentance; as the fruit of his resurrection is, that Christ may live in us, and we in him: all which is necessary to render us that *new creature* in Christ Jesus, without which nothing availeth in the sight of God.

Hence, therefore, let us be instructed in the nature of true repentance; lest we be led away into that common error, that the mere relinquishment of some gross enormity, as theft, fornication, profaneness, sabbath-breaking, is the genuine and only repentance. It is certain, that this is a kind of *external* repentance: but it is no less so, that all the scriptures alike inculcate the necessity of an *inward* repentance, extending more deeply than the mere letter of scripture might, at first, appear to require. A man, under the influence of this repentance, not only supports a fair conversation in the world, but he also denies and hates himself. Renouncing the world and all he calls his own, and crucifying

the flesh, he commits himself by faith to God alone; and offers up to him, a broken and contrite heart, as the sacrifice most acceptable in his sight.—This character of inward repentance is eminently set forth in the psalms of David, and particularly in those termed Penitential.

It remains then, that this is the only true repentance, when the heart of the sinner is inwardly torn with grief, and weighed down by heaviness; and when, on the other hand, it is restored by faith, sweetened by the remission of sin, quickened by the infusion of divine joy, provoked to good works, and thoroughly transformed and changed. Such a frame of mind cannot fail to be attended also with an *external* reformation of life and manners. But on the contrary, though a man be very serious in the performance of bodily penances, and, from a dread of punishment, abstain from the commission of notorious sins; yet if he continue unreformed and unregenerate in his heart, and enter not upon that new and inward life which it has been our object to describe, such a one will prove but a *cast-away* at last, notwithstanding the whole train of his external acts. It will avail him nothing to cry "Lord, Lord!" he shall hear the tremendous declaration, "I never knew you!" for most certain it is, that "not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those only who do the will of their heavenly Father."

And under this awful sentence of divine majesty, all men are comprised, of what rank or order soever, who do not truly and inwardly repent, and who are not new creatures in Christ.

CHAP. V.

Of True Faith.

FAITH is a solid confidence, and a firm persuasion of the grace of God promised to us in Christ Jesus, for the remission of sin and eternal life; and it is begotten in the heart, by the word of God and the Holy Spirit. By this faith, the forgiveness of our sins is freely conferred upon us, without any reference to our merits, but of mere grace, and for the sake of the merits of Christ alone; that so, our faith might rest on a firm and solid foundation, and remain unmoved by perplexity and doubts.

This forgiveness of sin constitutes our justification before God, which is true, solid, and eternal; for this righteousness is purchased neither by men nor angels, but by the obedience, merit, and the perfect ransom, of the Son of God himself. We appropriate and apply it to ourselves, by faith; and hence the imperfections which still adhere to us, cannot condemn us, since, for the sake of Christ, who now lives and works within us, they are covered with a veil of grace.

By this cordial and unshaken faith in the goodness of God, man wholly dedicates his heart to the Almighty, in whom alone he seeks his rest. To him only is he now united, and with him alone he enters into delightful fellowship. He partakes of all things that are of God

and of Christ, and is made one spirit with the Lord. From him also, he receives divine power and strength; together with a new life, attended with new joys, new pleasures, new engagements, in which are found peace, inward ease, and durable satisfaction, together with justification and sanctification by the Holy Spirit.

It is thus that man is born of God by faith: but wherever there is true faith, there Christ is verily present with all his righteousness, holiness, and remission of sin; with all his merits, justification, grace, adoption, and inheritance of eternal life. This is the new birth and the new creature, springing from faith in Christ; which, being a most substantial change, is, with the greatest propriety, termed *regeneration.* Hence, the apostle Paul calls faith a *substance;** understanding by it, a sure, solid, and unshaken confidence in "things hoped for," and a lively conviction of "things not seen." For the consolation conveyed by a vital faith, is so powerful, as to convince the heart of the divine truth by inward experience, and by the tasting of the sovereign goodness in the soul, and of the peace of God that passes all understanding; yea, it is so mighty, as to enable its possessors, when required, to seal the truth of the gospel with life itself. In this consists that strength of the spirit, that might of the inner man, that vigour of faith, that holy boldness; this is that confidence towards God, that divine *plerophoria*, that exceeding and abounding assurance, which are so copiously set forth by the holy apostles.† That for which a man will dare to die, must be

* Heb. xi. 1. † 2 Tim. ii. 1. Eph. iii. 16. Eph. iii. 12. Phil. i. 14. 1 John iii. 21. 1 Thess. i. 5. 1. Thess. ii. 2.

rooted in the mind, and, by the operation of the spirit of God, afford an inward assurance. It must be a cordial, powerful, and eternal comfort, infusing heavenly and supernatural strength into the soul, by which the fear of death and the love of the world may be both subdued. Now all this begets so solid a trust in Christ, and so close a union with him, as neither death nor life is able to dissolve. Hence St. John says: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."*

To be born of God is indeed no vain figure, no empty name; it must necessarily be a lively and powerful change, worthy the majesty of an omnipotent God. To believe that the living God could beget a dead offspring, that lifeless members and useless organs could proceed from him, were very wickedness. It is sure and undoubted that God, being a *living* God, cannot but beget a *living* man, even the new man in Christ Jesus.

Again, our faith is the victory which overcomes the world;† and who can question whether it be endued with strength sufficient for the conquest? It is, it must be a lively, vigorous, potent, divine, and victorious principle; but all its power is derived from him who is embraced by it, even Christ. By means of faith, we return into God again, and become *one* with him; and from Adam, as from an accursed vine, are transplanted into Christ, the living and blessed vine.‡ In Christ, we possess every good, and in him, are justified. As a scion, when grafted on a good tree, grows, flourishes, and bears fruit, but, without it, withers away;

* 1 John v. 4. † Ibid. ‡ John xv. 4.

so man, separate from Christ, is as an accursed vine, whose grapes are bitterness and gall ;* but in him, on the contrary, he is fruitful and blessed ; because " he was made to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."†

It is most evident, from what has been advanced, that works cannot possibly justify a sinner; because, before we can perform any good work, we must be ingrafted into Christ by faith: and it is equally clear, that justification is entirely the gift of God, freely conferred on man and preventing all human merit. How shall a dead man see, hear, stand, walk, or do any good, unless he be first raised from the dead, and endued with a new principle of life? Neither canst thou O man, who art dead in sins, do any work that is good or acceptable, unless thou be first raised unto life by Jesus Christ. And this being granted, it necessarily follows that justification proceeds only from faith in Christ. Faith is like a new-born babe just come into the world, weak and naked, poor and destitute, and laid before the eyes of the Saviour; from whom, as from a parent, it receives righteousness and holiness, light and life, together with the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The naked child is then cloathed with the mercy of God. He lifts up both his hands in poverty of spirit, and is made a partaker of grace and health, truth and holiness. It is, therefore, this receiving of Christ in the heart, and this alone, that makes a man holy and happy, and evidences that his justification flows from faith, and not from works. It is the nature of faith to receive the whole Christ, and to appro-

* Deut. xxxii. 32, 33. † 2 Cor. v. 21.

priate him, together with all that he has, to the mourning, penitent soul. Then sin and death, the devil and hell, fall before us, and are unable any longer to preserve their ground. Nay, so effectually and so powerfully, do the merits of Christ justify the sinner, that if the sins of the whole world were charged on one man, they would not avail to condemn him, if he believed in Christ.

Inasmuch, therefore, as Christ *lives and dwells* in thy heart by faith,* never, O believer! indulge the thought, that this, his indwelling in thee, is an empty fancy, unattended with any vital operation. Rather believe that it is a quickening principle, a mighty work, and an effectual transforming of thy mind. Faith effects two things: it first *ingrafts* thee into Christ, and gives him freely to thee with all that he has; and then, it *renews* thee in Christ, that thou mayest grow, flourish, and be purified in him. The wild graft is introduced into the stock, for no other end than that it may flourish and bear fruit. As by the apostasy of Adam and the temptation of the devil, the seed of the serpent was sown in man, growing up into a tree and bearing the fruits of death; even so by the divine word and the Holy Spirit, is faith sown in man, as the seed of God.† In this seed all divine virtues and properties are, in a most wonderful manner, comprehended; which gradually expand themselves from day to day. This tree is adorned with a profusion of heavenly fruit; as love, patience, humility, meekness, peace, chastity, justice, temperance, fortitude. And

* Eph. iii. 17. † See Chap. II.

in this manner, the whole kingdom of God descends into man.

True and saving faith renews the whole man, purifies the heart, sanctifies the soul, and delivers from the love of the world. It unites with God; it hungers and thirsts after righteousness; it works love; and it brings peace, joy, patience, and comfort in adversity: it vanquishes the world; it makes us sons of God, and heirs of the treasures of heaven; and it constitutes us joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. But if any should be without a sense of the presence of faith, and of its consoling operations, let them not, on that account, despair; but rather let them trust in the grace which is promised in Christ: for this promise ever remains sure, immoveable, and everlasting. And though, through the infirmities incident to human nature, he should stumble and fall; yet, if the sinner return by unfeigned repentance, and more cautiously watch against the sin which so easily besets him, the grace of God will not be withdrawn. For Christ is and will ever be a *Christ;* yea he will be a Saviour, whether the faith that embrace him be strong or weak. A weak faith applies a whole Christ to itself, as well as a strong faith. So again, the *promise* of faith is universal and everlasting; and it is on this that faith wholly relies, be it weak, or be it strong. The Lord will re-visit thy soul in his own time, with a sense of his gracious favour; although, at the present, he may think fit to withhold it.*

* Upon this subject, see Book the Second.

CHAP. VI.

*The Kingdom of God Within.**

THE whole substance of the Christian religion, consists in the spiritual renovation of the mind of man. It was, therefore, the will of God, that those things which ought to be transacted in man *spiritually* and by faith, should be also *outwardly* set forth in the words of Holy Scripture. Since the word is the seed of God within us, it is necessary that it should also spring up and spiritually bear fruit. That must be accomplished *in us* by faith, which is declared *without us*, in the letter of Scripture: and if this effect be not produced, then the word is evidently to us but a dead seed, destitute of life and energy. Hence, we ought in faith and in spirit, to "taste and see" the truth of what the Scriptures have outwardly declared: for when God revealed his will in the Scriptures, he never designed that it should be a dead letter, but that it should grow up in us to a new and inward man.

These truths may be explained more clearly by a reference to some example, as that of Cain and Abel. The nature, manners, and actions of these two persons, as they are recorded in Scripture, clearly explain the motions and workings of the old and new man in the breast of the believer. What is their strife, but the daily

* Luke xvii. 21.

strife of the flesh and spirit; and what their enmity, but the enmity subsisting between the serpent and the seed of the woman?* With Abraham, the Christian is required to quit his own country, leaving all that he possesses, even life itself, in order that he may walk before God with a perfect heart, obtain the victory, and enter into the land of promise and kingdom of heaven.† With Lot, he must depart from Sodom and Gomorrah, forsaking the wicked course of the world;‡ not looking back with Lot's wife, but obeying Christ's injunction—"Remember her," in order that his deliverance may be completed.§

Hither are all the wars and battles of Israel against the heathen and infidel nations to be referred: for what is represented under this history, but the continual strife between the flesh and the spirit? Whatsoever is recorded of the Mosaical priesthood, the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, or the propitiatory, all has relation to the Christian believer. For unto him it appertains to pray in spirit and in truth; to burn spiritual incense; and to slay the sin-offering, by presenting his body, through mortification, as a reasonable service and sacrifice.

And if we advert to the New Testament itself, what is this, but an outward expression of those truths, which are to be inwardly fulfilled in the experience of the believer? If I become a new

* Gen. iv. 8.

† Gen. xii.—So our Lord: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;" that is, he must renounce all these rather than renounce Christ. Luke xiv.

‡ Gen. xix. § Luke xvii. 32.

creature in Christ, it is incumbent on me to live and walk in him; in him and with him to flee into exile, and to be a stranger upon the earth. The virtues that resided in him I ought to practise; humility, contempt of the world, meekness, and patience; and I am bound to be fervent in acts of benignity, charity, and loving-kindness. In and with Christ, I should exercise mercy, and pardon and love my enemies; with him, I ought to "bless them that curse me, do good to them that hate me, and pray for them that despitefully use me and persecute me."* With him, I must deny my own will, and resign myself to the will of my heavenly father. I must be tempted by Satan with him; and with him, I must obtain the victory. I am to be derided, despised, and vilified for the sake of the truth that is in me; and, if called to it, I ought to die for and with him, after the example of the saints, and in testimony that he, by faith, hath lived in me, and I in him. This is to be conformed to the image of Christ; this is to be born with and in Christ; to put on Christ; to grow up and be strong in Christ; to live with Christ in banishment; to be baptised with his baptism; to be scoffed and crucified with him; to die with him; to be buried with him; to rise with him from the dead; and to reign with him to all eternity.

If ever thou desirest to live in a constant union and conformity with thy Head and Saviour, thou art in this manner, to die daily with him, and to crucify the flesh. Should this divine harmony be laid aside, and another way devised more consonant to the fancy of mankind; then Christ, I fear, will not be within but without thee; far

* Matt. v. 44. Luke xxiii. 34.

from thy faith, thy heart, and thy spirit; and, in that case, he will profit thee nothing. But if thou permit him to dwell in thy heart by faith, he will be the hope of thy glory, thy comfort, and thy salvation. All this, O man! doth faith in Christ effect within the heart; and thus, the Word of God becomes a living Word, and, as it were, a living witness in us, of all those things which are externally declared in the Scriptures. Hence faith is termed, by the apostle, an *hypostasis* or substance.*

It is therefore evident, that all the sermons, discourses, and epistles, contained in the Word of God, whether proceeding from Christ, or the prophets, or the apostles; and, in a word, that all the Scriptures, in general, as it regards their complete fulfilment, belong to man, and to every man individually. It is not only the plain doctrines that thus appertain to us; but all the parables and miracles with which the history of Christ abounds, have their final reference to man; nor was it essentially requisite that they should ever have been recorded, were they not to be spiritually fulfilled in our own experience. When, therefore, I read that Christ healed others, I promise myself the same cure; because we live in unity one with another, Christ with me, and I with Christ. When I read further, how he cured the blind, I am encouraged to believe that he will restore me to the enjoyment of spiritual sight, who am blind by nature: and so, with regard to all his other miracles. Only own thyself to be blind, lame, deaf, or leprous; to be dead in trespasses and sins; and, then, he will surely heal thy maladies, and quicken that which

* Heb. xi. 1.

is dead, that so thou mayest have part in the first resurrection.

The substance of all that has been advanced is this: the Holy Scripture bears *outward* testimony to those things, which are to be *inwardly* fulfilled in man, by faith. It points out that image externally, which, by faith, is to be formed within him. It describes the kingdom of God in the *letter*, which is to be established in the heart, by faith, after the *spirit*. It exhibits Christ outwardly, who is by faith to live within me; and it testifies of the new birth and of the new creature, which I must experience in myself. All this I am to be made by faith, or the Scripture will profit me nothing.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Law of Nature.

When God created man, he fixed three things in his conscience so firmly, that they never could afterwards be effaced. These were a conviction of the existence of a Supreme Being; the assurance of a final judgment, or of a state of future rewards and punishments; and the law of nature, by which, what was honest and virtuous, might be discerned from that which was dishonest and vicious.

No nation has ever been discovered so wild and barbarous, as not to acknowledge the existence of some Deity; being naturally convinced of it, both by inward and outward arguments.

Indeed, they have not only acknowledged the *being* of a God, of which they were assured by their consciences; but they have also been affected with a sense of his *justice*, as an avenger of evil, and a rewarder of good; and this persuasion arose from the consciousness, that, on some occasions, they were harassed with fearful apprehensions; while, on others, they felt a measure of peace and joy. By this knowledge, they even proceeded farther, and discovered the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as appears from Plato, who has most amply discussed this subject. And, lastly, they gathered from this inward law, that God was the author and source of all that was *good* in nature, and therefore ought to be worshipped by an assiduous attention to virtue, and with a mind purified from vice. Hence, they defined *virtue* to be man's chief good; and schools of moral virtue were instituted by Socrates, and by other heathen philosophers.

This may be sufficient to convince us, that God, even since the fall, has communicated to all men, a spark of light, in order that they might be admonished of their heavenly origin, and be assured, that it was only by following these footsteps of divinity, that they could be restored to their former perfection. Some of the heathens themselves, have not been unacquainted with this truth; among whom is Aratus, the poet, quoted by St. Paul, who declares that "we are God's offspring."* The Gentiles, however, stifling the testimony of conscience, contemned the light of nature, and "the work of the law written in their hearts;†" so

* Acts xvii. 28. † Rom. ii. 15.

that it cannot but be their own fault, that they arec ondemned and lost; and they must, as St. Paul argues, be left altogether without excuse.* And as the Gentiles knew, by nature, the justice of God, and that such as did evil were worthy of death; and yet, not only committed evil but "*delighted*" in it; it follows, that they there- "by condemned themselves;" whilst "their thoughts accusing or excusing one another," convinced them of the certainty of the day of judgment,

But if the *Gentiles* shall be "inexcusable," because, though endued with the natural knowledge of God, they sought him not, as was their duty; what shall *they* plead in their behalf to whom God hath given his holy word, and whom he hath so earnestly invited to repentance, by Jesus Christ his beloved Son; in order that, forsaking the corruptions of the world, they might, by faith, apprehend the merits of the Saviour, and obtain eternal life and salvation? Therefore, every false Christian shall, in the day of judgment, be condemned by two uncontroulable witnesses: by his own conscience or the law of nature, and likewise by the revealed Word of God. In that day, "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom," than for such false pretenders to religion.† Their anguish and torment shall be without end; since God has made the soul immortal, and planted the conscience in it, to be both a witness and a judge.

The conscience can never throw off the recollection of God, and yet cannot of itself approach him; which must be attended with unutterable pain to the soul, and expose it to

* Rom. i. 19, 20. † Matt. xi. 24.

worm that dieth not, and to the fire that cannot be quenched. And the more the wicked have, through impenitence of heart, treasured up to themselves "wrath against the day of wrath,"* the more severely will vengeance be executed upon them. For as God, in the exercise of his righteous judgment, gave up the Gentiles to a reprobate mind, because they sinned against their own consciences, and "the work of the law written in their hearts;" so that they became blind in their understandings, and impetuously rushed into every kind of filthy and abominable pollution; thus drawing down upon themselves the wrath of God, denounced against all crimes that are committed against the light of knowledge: so, the same doom, (yea and a far heavier one,) will be inflicted upon those who rest in the mere profession of the Christian faith, and deny the *life* and the *power* of godliness. The reason of this is obvious: such persons have contemned the *inward* as well as the *outward* testimony of God, and have not only persevered in a state of impenitence, but have resisted the Divine Spirit, and blasphemed Him who favoured them with the light of his gospel. On this account, God gives them up to a reprobate mind, to a state worse than that of heathens and infidels. He sends them "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."†

This is the true reason why vices of so detestable a nature, universally abound among *Christians;* many of which were not so much as known among the *Pagan* nations. Whats atani-

* Rom. ii. 5. † 2. Thess. ii. 11.

cal pride, what insatiable covetousness, what unheard-of intemperance, what bestial lust,—in a word, what inhuman wickedness, is not practised by those who call themselves Christians! And whence does all this arise, but from that blindness and hardness of heart, which they have contracted by confirmed habits of iniquity? When the professors of Christianity disdain to imitate the meek and lowly Jesus, in their manners and their conversation; when they are scandalized at him, and consider it disgraceful to look to him whom God has appointed to be the light of the world, and our great example; then, the righteous God leaves them to follow Satan; to take upon them the life of the devil, his abominable impiety, wickedness, and lies; that they may execute with him, all the works of darkness. For thus saith the Lord, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you."*

Finally, if God gave up the *heathen* to so terrible a blindness and so reprobate a mind; and this, because they proved disobedient to the glimmering light of nature, or, as St. Paul expresses it, "because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," in order to be preserved by him;† how much more shall those be banished from life and salvation, to whom the truth of God has come not only by natural light, but by means of his revealed word, and new covenant; and who yet haughtily despise these special tenders of divine mercy! Of which new covenant, God thus speaks: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall

*. John xi. 35. † Rom. i. 28.

be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them even unto the greatest, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*

And here, let us also attend to what the Apostle says, concerning those who offend wilfully after the knowledge of the truth. "If," says he, "we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, (of the gospel), there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of (the divine) judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the (nominal disciples but real) adversaries (of Christ.) He that despised Moses' law," continues the Apostle, "died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."†—This terrible denunciation is not, however, made against those who fall through natural infirmity, but against them who sin wilfully and against knowledge, and who persevere to the end in a state of impenitence.

* Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. John vi. 45. † Heb. x. 26, 27.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Necessity of True Repentance.

It was the declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ, "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* By this declaration the Lord teaches us, that he calls sinners, but that he calls them to *repentance;* whence it is evident, that no man can come to Christ without true repentance and conversion from sin, and without a lively faith.

Repentance is a *death unto sin;* that, being dead to sin, we may be alive unto righteousness by faith, and obtain, in Christ Jesus, remission of sins. There is no repentance without a thorough contrition preceding it, by which the heart is broken and the flesh crucified. Hence it is termed "repentance from dead works;"† or the renunciation of such works as issue in damnation and death. To abstain from dead works is, therefore, one of the principal parts of true repentance.

If we be not the subjects of this repentance, the merit of Christ profits us nothing; nor can we lay the smallest claim to the benefits which are thence accruing. Christ proffers his aid, as the physician of souls, and his blood, as the only effectual medicine for our spiritual mala-

* Matt. ix. 12, 13. † Heb. vi. 1.

dies: but as no medicine will succeed in the cure of a disorder, unless the patient refrain from things that are hurtful in their tendency, and that resist the operation of the medicine: so, the blood and death of Christ, will be of no avail to him who does not fully resolve to quit his beloved sins, and to live up to the requirements of the gospel. "They who do such things, (the works of the flesh) shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" and, of course, have not any part in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Again, if Christ, by his most precious blood, is to become our medicine, it cannot be doubted but that we must be in a diseased state, and that we must, for ourselves, *feel* that we are so. The whole need not a physician, but the sick only; and none is spiritually sick, (at least so as to be conscious of it,) who does not experience unfeigned contrition for the sins which he has committed, and who has not a sense of the indignation of God excited against them. He is no proper patient for the physician of souls, who avoids not worldly lusts and vanities, honours and riches; but goes on in a state of spiritual unconcern, without any regard to his past life, or his final salvation. Upon a man of this character, no cure can possibly be wrought. He does not see his distemper, and therefore needs no physician. In short, Christ profits him nothing; and his merits leave no saving effect upon his soul. Remember, therefore, O man! that Christ is come to call *sinners to repentance:* and that it is only such as are broken in heart and contrite in spirit; only such as fervently desire and thirst after this righteousness,

* Gal. v. 21.

that are in a condition to receive the saving influence of the blood, death, and merits, of the Lord Jesus. Happy is he who feels this call in his heart; and still more happy, he who proves obedient to the call.

This "godly sorrow for sin, worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of;" and is the work of the Holy Spirit himself. It arises, first, from the *law;* and, next, from serious meditation on the *passion* of Christ, which abounds with loud invitations to unfeigned repentance. It exhibits, as in a mirror, the wrath of God against sin; and his infinite grace in saving the sinner. To make an atonement for our crimes, Jesus shed his blood; and love induced him to die for us, while we were yet sinners. Here the divine justice and clemency conspire in the sweetest manner for the salvation of souls. And is it possible, that a man should pretend to believe in Christ, when he delights in sins which the Lord expiated at no less a price than his own most precious blood?—When, therefore, O man! thou art tempted to pride and ambition, reflect upon the contempt and humiliation to which Jesus submitted, in order to atone for thy pride and thy ambition. When thou art covetous after this world, think of the poverty which he underwent, that he might make satisfaction for thy cupidity: and, surely, this will extinquish in thee, the love of money and of worldly estates. What anguish and agony did Christ suffer on account of thy lusts and sinful pleasures; and art thou yet in pursuit of these pleasures, that will leave behind them a mortal sting? Alas! how great must be the corruption of our nature, when we can de-

light in things, for which our Redeemer and Lord was sorrowful even unto death ?

Christ died to expiate thy wrath, hatred, and enmity ; to atone for thy bitterness and rancour, for thy love of revenge, and the implacableness of thy spirit. This he effected by his extreme mildness and patience, mercy and long suffering. And wilt thou be angry on every trifling occasion, and esteem revenge to be sweet, when, to atone for it, thy Redeemer drank out to the very dregs, the cup of bitterness and affliction ? Truly as many as assume to themselves the name of Christians, and yet do not forsake the pleasures of sin, " crucify Christ to themselves *afresh*, and put him to an open shame ;"* and it is, therefore, utterly impossible, that they should partake of that merit which they " tread under foot." They pollute the blood of the everlasting testament, and do not believe that their sins are expiated by it. They do " despite unto the spirit of grace ;" they despise and resist him ; and, by their ungodly lives, scorn and contemn the grace of God offered in Christ Jesus.† Hence, the blood of the Saviour, which was shed for their sakes, cries aloud for vengeance against them ; and this it does, by the righteous judgment of God, which they thus draw down upon themselves :—a consideration, that ought to strike a terror into every one that names the name of Christ. And, indeed, " it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ;" for He is a *living* God, and not a lifeless idol, incapable of revenging so scornful a contempt of his grace and mercy. With this divine wrath and vengeance, even

* Heb. vi. 6. † Heb. x. 29.

their own consciences threaten them, as inevitably following those who, (though they know that it was to atone for sin, that the Son of God died so ignominious a death,) are yet not careful to put it away.

It was for this reason, that, soon after the death of Christ, repentance was preached over all the world; namely, both because he died "for the sins of the whole world;"* and because *in all places* of the world, men should repent.† Thus it is said, "God now commandeth all men *every where* to repent," and to receive with a contrite, penitent, and believing heart, the sovereign medicine purchased by the death of Christ; in order that the grace of God be not frustrated, but answer the end designed. Remission of sins immediately follows true repentance: but how shall a man have his sins remitted, when he does not repent of them, nay when he still rejoices in them? Nothing surely could be more preposterous, than to expect that sins should be pardoned, which a man has no design to renounce: and nothing can be more absurd, than to challenge the merits of Christ, and yet wallow, as it were, in the mire of sin, which caused Christ's *death*.

But certain and obvious as these truths are in themselves, there are many that call themselves Christians, who *never* repented, and who yet will presume to lay claim to a share in the merits of Christ, and in the remission of sins which he has purchased. They have not, in any tolerable degree, ceased to indulge their accustomed wrath, covetousness, pride, malice, envy, hypocrisy, and unrighteousness; but have rather

* 1 John ii. 2. † Acts xvii. 30.

become more enslaved by them, in consequence of daily additions made to the number of their crimes; and yet, alas! they expect forgiveness of sin, and fearlessly apply to themselves the merits of Christ, as a defence against the impending judgment of Almighty God. And though this is one of the grossest and most palpable of errors, yet they do not hesitate to bestow upon it the specious name of *faith*, by which they hope for salvation. These are they that flatter themselves to their own destruction: fondly supposing that they are true Christians, because they have a speculative knowledge of the gospel, and because they believe that Jesus died for their sins.

This, alas! is not *faith*, but *fancy;* and thou art an unhappy, and most awfully infatuated *false Christian*, if thou canst suffer thyself to be deluded in this manner! Never did the word of God teach so; nor did the prophets and apostles ever, at any time, preach this destructive doctrine; but the unvarying language of the inspired writers, is—"If thou earnestly desirest the pardon of thy sins, *repent* of them, and firmly resolve to give up the practice of them; and thus, grieving from thy heart that thou hast so greatly offended God, and determining to lead a new life, believe on Jesus Christ, the great propitiation for the sins of the whole world." But how should that man be sorry for his sins, who will not be induced to quit them? and how should he quit them, while he remains unconcerned about committing them? Christ, and all his apostles and prophets, unite in teaching thee, O man! that thou must die to the world and to thy sins; die to thy pride, thy covetousness, thy lust, and thy wrath; and

that thou must return to the Lord with all thy heart, and implore his gracious pardon. And this being sincerely done, thou art absolved, and thy sins are forgiven. *Then*, the heavenly physician looks upon thee graciously; for he is come to revive those that are of a contrite spirit, and to bind up the broken in heart. But if thou seekest for some other way to be saved, than that which is here pointed out, then Christ will profit thee nothing, and the boasting of thy faith is altogether vain.

True faith is indeed so active a principle, that it thoroughly renews him who possesses it; it mortifies sin, and raises the soul, with Christ, into a new life: for such a man lives, by faith in Christ, in His love, His humility, His meekness, and His patience. It is thus, O man! that Jesus becomes unto thee the way of life, and thus thou becomest in him a "new creature." But if thou continuest to pursue thy beloved pleasures, and remainest unwilling to die to the corrupt bent of "the old man," how wilt thou pretend to be a new creature? How is it possible for thee to belong to Christ, when thou dost not "crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts?"

Go, then, O mistaken man! and attend the ordinances of God's house without omission; and every month, or even week, receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: but *remember*, that all this is far short of remission of sins, if thou bring not with thee a truly penitent, and believing spirit. This alone can qualify thee for a worthy participation of that healing medicine which is offered in the gospel. The word and the sacraments are indeed sovereign remedies; but they are so to those only who unfeign-

edly repent, and who daily bewail and abhor the manner of their past lives. What would it profit, to anoint a stone with costly ointment, or to administer medicine to the dead? What harvest shall thou reap, if thou sowest among briars and thorns? First pull up the thorns and thistles that choke the good seed, and, then, thou mayest reasonably expect the precious fruit.

To conclude, Christ will never profit thee at all, if thou continuest in love with sin rather than with Him. The *birth* of the Saviour is of no advantage to a man whose aim it is not to be *born* with Him; nor shall His *death* avail for any, who are not disposed to *die* to sin, and to mortify the deeds of the flesh. So, the *resurrection* of Christ will benefit none who will not *rise* from sin, and live unto righteousness; nor will his *ascension* prove a blessing to any who refuse to *ascend* with him, and to have their conversation in heaven. But when, on the contrary, a man, like the Prodigal Son, truly returns to his offended father, deploring, hating, and forsaking his sins; when he earnestly seeks forgiveness, and, with the eye of faith, beholds Christ and his bleeding wounds, as the Israelites beheld the serpent of brass, and lived;* when, at last, under a real sense of guilt, he cries out with the penitent publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" *then*, *then*, the pardon is granted, the absolution is sealed, however great and many the sins be which he has committed against his God.

Such is the efficacy of the redemption which the blood of Christ has purchased, and of so

* Numb. xxi. 9.

extensive a nature is his merit, when applied by faith to a penitent soul. Nothing, indeed, can be nobler, can be greater. Thus is brought to pass the scripture, "He giveth repentance and remission of sins;"* that is, he pardons the repentant sinner freely, perfectly, and wholly, for Christ's sake. For it is a pleasure with God to exercise mercy, and to forgive a sinner: "my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."† Then it is, that the death of Christ is rendered truly effectual; and then it is that the angels of God rejoice in heaven, because the blood of the Lamb has become salvation to those for whom it was shed.‡

CHAP. IX.

Of the Antichristian Lives of many called Christians.

Every one calls himself by the Christian name, even though he do not perform the least part of what he thereby professes; and, by this means, the Saviour is denied, contemned, blasphemed, crucified; and, as it were, cast out of the sight of men, as dead and buried. The Apostle expressly declares, that some persons "crucify the Son of God afresh:" and would to

* Acts v. 31. † Jer. xxxi. 20. ‡ Luke xv. 7.

God, that Christ were not, even in *our* days, crucified again and again, among those who call themselves after his name, and honour him with their lips; and yet, by their antichristian lives and actions, utterly reject and deny him. His most holy, humble, and exemplary life, is, at this day, to be found among but few: and wherever there is not the *life* of Christ, there Christ is not himself, however strong the clamour be, about His church, His faith, and His doctrine.

Christian faith without a Christian life, is a barren tree without fruit. True faith works by love;* and wherever it is found, there Christ dwells, with all his divine graces and virtues:† but if these be not expressed in the lives of those who profess His doctrine, there Christ himself is rooted up and denied; and the empty professor is miserably deceived into false notions of the church, and of the Christian religion.

In order to explain the doctrine of faith, and remove all manner of pernicious prejudices, Christ hath said, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father and the holy angels."‡ This denial of Christ is not only made in words, (as by those who renounce Christ and the profession of Christianity), but it is also done, when, by our lives and actions, we wilfully sin against the Saviour, and resist the good spirit that proceeds from him. St. Paul speaks of some, who "profess that they know God, but *in works deny him*;"§ and it is certain, that Christ is no less denied by a wicked and devilish life, than he is

* Gal. v. 6. † Eph. iii. 17.

‡ Matt. x. 33. Luke xii. 9. § Tit. i. 16.

by verbal abjuration. It is with hypocrisy, and an empty profession of the faith, as it is with open wickedness; and this is strikingly illustrated by our Lord's parable of the two sons, who being commanded by their father to go and work in his vineyard, the one *(openly* denying), said, "I will not;" while the other *(professing* obedience,) said, "I go, Sir," and went not.*

This is certainly a forcible representation of those Christians, who make religion to consist in empty profession without obedience. They will cry "Yea, yea," and "Lord, Lord!" and yet are worse than others, because they pretend to be children of the Father, and yet do not, in any respect, obey his will. Their character is thus given by St. Paul; "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."† Now, what is it to deny the power of godliness, but to deny Christ himself, and to shake off allegiance to him; and thus to act the part of a heathen, under the mask and name of a Christian? These are "the children of infidelity or disobedience," in whom the spirit, not of Christ, but of *this world*, worketh.‡ They, therefore, who usurp a Christian's name, and yet do not a Christian's work, shall be denied, in their turn, by the Saviour, when he shall pronounce the tremendous sentence, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."§

* Matt. xxi. 28. † 2 Tim. iii. 5. ‡ Eph. ii. 2.
§ Matt. vii. 23.

CHAP. X.

Of False Christianity.

If the conduct of the generality of men in the present age, be examined by the standard of life and doctrine left us by Christ, we must soon come to the conclusion, that it is wholly *anti-christian*, and totally repugnant to his example. The lives of men in our day is made up of insatiable avarice, sordid and self-seeking manners, earthly-mindedness, worldly cares, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; disobedience, wrath, strife, hatred, malice, contentions, and a violent thirst after human applause, pomps and dignities. Add to these, the jealousies, the revenge, the secret feuds and envyings, the unforgiving spirit, the injustice and hypocrisy; the frauds and calumnies; the lies and perjuries; together with all the impurity and unrighteousness with which the world so exceedingly abounds. In short, the whole life of the children of this generation consists of the love of the world, self-love, self-honour, and self-seeking.

To all this, the life of Christ is entirely opposed: it can have no sort of communion with it. The blessed Jesus and the followers of his meek and *self-denying* life, can never be reconciled to this bustle and this confusion. His life is nothing else but pure and sincere love to God

and men. It is composed of humanity and kindness, of meekness and patience, of humility and obedience even unto death; of mercy and righteousness, of truth and simplicity, of purity and holiness, of contempt of the world, its honours, wealth, and pleasures; of self-denial; of sustaining the cross, tribulations, and afflictions; of fervent desires after the kingdom of God, and after the fulfilment of the divine will. This is the life of Christ, to which the False Christianity of the present age is so greatly opposed.

If then it be the truth, that he who is not *with* Christ is accounted as one that is *against* him; and he that *standeth* not *in* the will of God, as he that *withstandeth* it; (and we know that this is the language of our Lord himself;) it is most evident, that the generality of those who make a public profession of the Christian faith, not being with Christ, must be against him. They have no communion with Him, but are contrary to him; they are not led by a Christian, but by an *antichristian* spirit.

Scarcely any indeed are to be found, who are of one soul, one will, one mind, and one spirit with Him: and yet only these can be Christ's, or accounted his disciples. It is in reference to the latter, the apostle speaks, when he says, they have "the mind of Christ;"* and, in another place, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."† The children of the world have not this mind, and it is certain they are not *with* but *against* Christ. Now whatever any man's *profession and doctrine* be, he who is thus *against* Christ in his life and actions, is most undoubtedly an *Antichrist*.

* 1 Cor. ii. 16. † Phil. ii. 5.

Where, alas! shall we now find Christians, in the midst of so many *unchristian* disorders that universally abound? How justly may they be termed "a little flock!"* as they were called by our Lord himself. How justly has the prophet compared the church to a solitary cottage in a vineyard, and to a wasted city!† "Woe is me," exclaims Micah, "I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the first ripe fruit. The good man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men."‡

God alone knows where and who these are: but be they where and who they may, assuredly Christ will be with them "alway, even unto the end of the world."§ Nor will he ever leave them without sufficient succour; "I will not leave you orphans," he says, "but I will come unto you."‖ For he knoweth them that are his, and those whom he is said to *know*, he watches over with never-ceasing and distinguishing care. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."¶ But for them who are not disposed to obey this injunction, let them assume some *other* name that shall better accord with their conduct: and let them not name His *name*, until they witness to His life.

* Luke xii. 32. † Isa. i. 8. ‡ Micah vii. 1, 2.
§ Matt. xxviii. 20. ‖ John xiv. 18. ¶ Tim. ii. 19.

CHAP. XI.

On the Imitation of Christ.

GOD has appointed our Lord Jesus Christ to be our prophet or teacher; and, by a voice from heaven, has commanded us to hear him; saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." This office was most punctually executed by the Son of God, not only in words, but, (as became a teacher engaged in so sacred a function,) by a most holy and unblemished life. In allusion to this, St. Luke thus prefaces his account of the acts of the Apostles: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to *do* and teach, &c.," where, it is to be remarked, that he places *doing* before *teaching;* intimating that these ought never to be separated, in any one that attempts to act as a teacher sent from God. It certainly is the duty of every true teacher, first, to practise himself the duties which he purposes to teach others. Such a teacher was our Lord Jesus; and his conduct is the pattern of teaching, and the book of life which we ought to study.

It was for this cause, that the Son of God became man, and conversed with men upon earth, that he might give us a visible example of an innocent, perfect, and divine life; and that we might follow him as a light that shineth in darkness, to lead us in the way in which we should

go. Hence he calls himself "the light of the world;" and promises that "he who followeth him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."* And from this it most clearly appears, that they who refuse to follow Christ in his life, and to tread by faith in his steps, remain in darkness, and are not in the way to obtain "the light of life." This darkness is *an impenitent and depraved life*, called by the apostle "works of darkness," which are to be cast off, that so we may put on "the armour of light:" and in genuine repentance, both these duties are comprised.

It has before been abundantly proved, that godly sorrow and true faith thoroughly change a man; that they crucify the flesh, effect an entire transformation in the soul, and beget, through the Holy Ghost, that heavenly habit of mind, which constitutes the soul's "armour of light." Lest, however, this should become a mere *notional* knowledge, devoid of life and practice, God has been pleased to set before us his own Son, not only as a ransom and a Mediator, but as a *mirror* of perfect piety, and as a most finished pattern of the new man, thoroughly regenerated after the image of God. In him, the fleshly Adam, the corrupt nature, never reigned; but the blessed God alone. Him it hath pleased God to set forth before our eyes, that, contemplating him and his righteous life, we might be daily more and more renewed after his image.

Fatal experience teaches us continually, that our whole nature, body and soul, is polluted with every kind of sin, vice, and corruption.

* John viii. 12.

These are the works of the devil appearing in the carnal man ; and it is principally in the depraved and perverted *will*, that these diabolical operations are most visibly discerned. For the depraved will is the root of all sin : and if that only were removed, there would be sin no more. With regard to the power and natural bias of this will, it consists chiefly in turning man away from God and from His will. Now whatever departs from that Being who is the sovereign and supreme Good, cannot but be in itself evil ; for it partakes of the nature of the supreme evil, and is a violation of the original constitution of our nature, as derived from God himself. It was this aversion from God, (the aversion, that is, of the devil and man,) that produced the fall ; whence sin entered into the world, and has, by fleshly generation, passed upon all men.

The nature of man is then inoculated with the nature of the devil himself, and his will tainted with satanical wickedness, as with deadly poison. Hence Christ called the Pharisees, "children of the devil ;"* and even to some of his own disciples, gave the name of Satan ;† intimating as though the covetousness, lying, pride, and evil concupiscence, by which they were actuated, and by which the nature of all men was defiled, were the devil himself.

Hence it may, with all propriety, be affirmed, that they who lead a life void of repentance, a life of pride, avarice, lust, and envy, *live in the devil*, and partake of his nature ; and that he liveth in them. Such persons may assume the garb of honesty ; they may veil their real cha-

* John viii. 44. † Matt. xvi. 32. John vi. 70.

racters under a fair shew of morality and correct deportment, and they may make a specious profession of piety; yet, *inwardly*, according to the saying of Christ to the Jews, they are, nevertheless, devils. A declaration dreadful to be made, but the truth of which is confirmed both by the Word of God, and by continual experience.

Our nature, as fallen creatures, being thus miserably depraved, thus utterly corrupted, thus desperately perverted by the evil one; and being so wholly vitiated in all its springs; there is an absolute necessity that it should be rectified thoroughly, and *renewed* in the image of God. There must be a *total renovation* of the soul, in all its powers and all its faculties. It is asked, but how shall this be effected? We answer,—as the *chief evil* has made a breach upon our nature, and has infused poison into its very springs; so must the *chief good* re-visit and renew our nature, that it may be assimilated to itself. That which the supreme evil has so radically corrupted, can be corrected only by a thorough and vital *penetration* of the supreme good, even of God himself; who assumed our nature for this sole end and purpose.

The Son of God truly became man, not for his own, but for our sakes; that, reconciling us to God by himself, he might make us partakers of the sovereign good, having first cleansed and sanctified us, to that end: for whatever is to be sanctified, must be sanctified by God and with God. And as God is personally in Christ, so ought we to be united to him by faith, that we may live in God, and God in us; we in Christ, and Christ in us; that the will of God be in us, and we in the will of God, being made "the

righteousness of God in Christ.* This is the only way in which Christ administers medicine to our corrupt nature; and the more powerfully this medicine works in man, the more effectually it acts on his moral disease, and purges his nature from that subtle and latent evil.

And, Oh! how blessed is the man in whom Christ does all and is all; whose will, thoughts, mind, and words, are the will, thoughts, mind, and words of Christ. It was thus the apostle said, "We have the mind of Christ."† And so indeed it must be with the believer; because the life of Christ is the new life, yea the new man in him; and whoever lives in Christ after the spirit, hath really put on the new man, and all the graces with which he is adorned. His meekness and obedience are the meekness and obedience of Christ; his patience and humility are the patience and humility of Jesus; and his life itself is the life of Christ, by whom and in whom he lives. This is the "new creature" which is created after God;‡ and that life of Christ in us, of which St. Paul experimentally says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."‖ This is to follow Christ truly. This is to walk in the light of his life, and to bring forth "fruits meet for repentance:" for, by this means, the "old man" is destroyed, the carnal life gradually declines, and the new and divine life revives in the soul. He who has this life is not a *nominal*, but a *real* Christian; a Christian not in word and in appearance only, but in deed and in truth. He is a true child of God, begotten of Him, and quickened

* 2 Cor. v. 21. † 1 Cor. ii. 16.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 17. ‖ Gal. ii. 20.

and renewed by faith after the image of Jesus Christ.

If we cannot attain to a state of perfection, while encompassed with so many infirmities that obstruct our progress in the divine life, we ought not, therefore, to be discouraged, but rather to be inspired with more fervour in seeking after a consummation so much to be desired. We ought ardently to wish and pray, to endeavour and study, that the kingdom of Christ be established within us, and the kingdom of Satan destroyed. The object of our cares and efforts, of our groans and prayers, should be,—how we may more and more mortify the old man by daily repentance, as a preparation for the attainment of that high prize. The more a man dies to himself, the more Christ lives in him again; the more corruptions are removed by the good spirit of God, the more divine grace possesses the heart. In proportion as the flesh is crucified, the spirit is quickened; as the works of darkness are put off, the armour of light from above, is put on; and in the same degree as the *outward* man perisheth, the *inward* man is strengthened and renewed.* The decrease of the animal life, is the increase of that which is spiritual and divine. As the affections of the former, self-love, ambition, wrath, covetousness, and voluptuousness, are weakened and subdued; so are the opposite affections of the spiritual life invigorated and raised. The farther a man departs from the world, from "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" the more do God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, enter into the heart and dwell

* 2 Cor. iv. 16.

there. To conclude, the more nature, flesh, darkness, and the world, reign in man; the less of grace, light, the Holy Spirit, God, and Christ, is there to be found in him.

This spiritual life is enmity to the flesh, because it is hereby restrained, subdued, and brought under the yoke, and crucified with its "affections and lusts." In this, however, consists the power, efficacy, and fruit, of true repentance. The nature of flesh and blood is to lead a lawless, dissolute, and voluptuous life, unshackled by restraint, and entirely agreeable to the will and humour. It is this which it finds sweet, and in which it rejoices. To the flesh, the life of Christ is a most severe cross, and an intolerable burden; but to the new and spiritual man, "this yoke is easy and this burden light,"* and attended with divine serenity and peace of mind. The true rest of the soul will be sought for in vain, unless in the faith of Christ; in his meekness and humility, patience and love. Here, he hath himself promised, "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." He that really loves the Lord Jesus, will not deem it hard to suffer even death for his sake, but account it a joy and a happiness. Such is the yoke of the Saviour, which we are invited to take upon us, that we may find "rest unto our souls."

It is necessary therefore, that every one who is resolved to take upon himself the yoke of Christ, and to imitate His holy example, should in the first place, shake off the yoke of Satan, and repress the carnal, selfish, and unruly propensities of his fallen nature, in order that the flesh may vex the spirit no more. All must be subjugated

* Matt. xi. 28.

to the obedience of Christ, to the wise and righteous discipline of his law : that is, the will, understanding, reason, and appetites, together with the sensual and *Adamical* desires that before reigned in the mortal body, must henceforth yield a free obedience to the government of the Lord.*

True it is, that the flesh is highly gratified when honoured, and courted, and praised, and when abounding in the riches and pleasures of this life ; but the Cross of Christ, by which the flesh is mortified and subdued, requires us to prefer ignominy, contempt, and poverty, to affluence and honour ; to account ourselves unworthy of these things, and freely to give up all that is great in the estimation of the world. It is here that the humility and life of Christ are most striking and apparent. This is the yoke, and this the burden, which are easy and light to the spirit ; this is the law of love, the commandments of which are not grievous but delightful.† What was the whole life of Christ, but holy poverty, extreme contempt, and severe persecution ? who " came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."‡

It is the tendency of the natural man, to desire to excel others, and to be thought of importance ; but the spiritual man loves the humility of the Redeemer, and desires to be reputed as nothing in this world. The carnal man, that follows the propensities of corrupt nature, and has never learned of Christ humility, meekness, and love, deems it folly to live as Jesus lived ; and thinks those only are wise, who indulge

* Rom. vi. 12. † 1 John v. 3. ‡ Matt. xx. 28.

their appetites in security, and satiate themselves with every object which they desire: and even when such a one most lives in the devil, he is so blinded by ignorance and darkness, as to esteem his own life the happiest that can be desired, and to applaud himself in his own folly. And hence it is, that these deluded wretches, following the *foolish light* of carnal wisdom, are not only deceived themselves, but are the means of involving others in the same ruin.

They, on the contrary, whose minds have been enlightened by the true and eternal light, are struck with horror and surprise, whenever they cast their eyes upon the pomps and vanities of this world, upon the ambition and pride, the wrath and revenge, the intemperance and voluptuousness, and the other fruits of the carnal life which universally abound. Their language is, "Alas! how far removed is all this from Christ! How far from true repentance and the knowledge of Jesus, is the man that acts thus! How far from the nature and disposition of a child of God! Alas! he still is dead in sins, and a slave of the devil."

That man, therefore, who does not imitate the life of Christ, is an entire stranger to true repentance; he is not a Christian, nor a child of God; nay, he is wholly ignorant of Jesus Christ: for he who desires to know Christ savingly, both as the Saviour of the world, and as the great exemplar of life, must know him to be pure meekness, gentleness, and love, and to be wholly composed of patience and humility. This living ensample of goodness and piety, which the Lord hath set before him, he must carry in his heart, and labour to be transformed into its image. The virtues that resided in

Christ, he must have within himself; and if he would ever effectually know him, he must love and admire them in his inward soul. As a plant discovers its nature by the fragrance which it diffuses around, so the knowledge of Christ discovers itself by the sweet and sacred odours which proceed from it. Then is acquired an experimental knowledge of the life, power, rest, and consolation, which flow from the Saviour; which circulate through all the faculties of the soul, and quicken them by a kind of spiritual sweetness. It is then that the soul finds by experience, that Christ is as "an ointment poured forth," and as hidden manna. Thus is man made to "taste how good the Lord is;"* thus is the truth known, and the supreme and eternal good apprehended and enjoyed. And thus is it certainly ascertained, that the life of Christ is infinitely superior to every other life, in goodness and sweetness, in dignity and in peace; yea, that it vies with life eternal itself, being indeed the antepast of such a life upon *earth*.

As there is nothing more excellent than the life of Christ, nothing more delightful, more peaceful, or more satisfying, it ought to have no rival in our affections, but to be endeared to us above every other consideration. He who is destitute of Christ, and of his knowledge, can form no conception of the rest and quiet of eternal life; or of the sovereign good; or of the everlasting truth; or of the imperishable word; or of the joy of the soul, or of the true light of love: for all these centre in Christ, and he who has him has them; because Christ is all these to the man who truly believes in his holy name.

* Psal. xxxiv. 8.

"Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love."*

It is therefore most evident, that the fruits and effect of the new birth are not in words however sound, or in a *form* of godliness however specious; but in an *abiding substance*, even in that *love* which is God himself. A son bears the image of him who begat him; and whoever is born of God should evidence it by *love*, for God is love; and hence it is clear that "he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

The *knowledge of God*, in like manner, does not consist in words, nor in merely speculative and superficial knowledge, but in a vital, lovely, and divine feeling, in a pure and unmixed pleasure, gently infusing itself into the heart, by faith, and penetrating it with an unutterable and heavenly sweetness. This is a true, living, and efficacious knowledge of God; such as that which the Psalmist means, when he says, "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God:"† and again, "thy loving kindness, (as experienced in the divine sensations of my soul) is better than life," (or than *lives*); that is, this divine life infinitely transcends every other life: in which, it is evident, that he means that unutterable joy and ecstacy, which is produced by an *experimental* knowledge, and which is infused into a faithful heart. Thus man liveth in God, and God in man; and thus man knoweth God in truth, and is known of God.

* 1 John iv. 7, 8.

CHAP. XII.

Of dying to Ourselves and the World, and of living unto Christ.

"CHRIST," says the apostle, "died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." Besides that this sentence is replete with divine consolation, declaring that Jesus died for all, it inculcates a doctrine of the most salutary nature, that we live not unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us. To live to Him, however, before we be dead to ourselves, is utterly impossible. If therefore thy resolution be to live to Christ, thou must certainly die to the world and to thyself; but if thou rather inclinest to live to the world and to thyself, it follows that thou must certainly renounce thy communion with the Saviour. For what communion hath light with darkness, Christ with the world, or the spirit with the flesh?

There are three kinds of death; the one *spiritual*, the second *natural*, and the third *eternal*. The first is, where a man dies daily to himself; that is, to his own carnal desires, to his avarice, pride, lust, and wrath, and such other sins and passions as have their rise in a corrupt nature.

It is of the second kind of death, that the apostle speaks, where he says, "to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* As if he had said, Christ is the life and death, the gain and advantage of the believer, even when he passes through *natural* death, for by it, he exchanges a short and miserable life for an eternal and blessed one; and a few fading vanities for possessions that are permanent and divine: an exchange which cannot but prove in the highest degree gainful to himself.

If however any think the apostle's language is rather to be understood of the *spiritual* death mentioned above, they will not, in my opinion, commit an error. For thrice happy is the soul, to whom, in this sense, "to live is Christ:" thrice happy the soul in which Jesus lives by faith; and that imitates the graces that manifested themselves in him, especially those of humility and meekness. But alas! by far the greater part of men, have put on the life of the devil rather than the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Awake, therefore, O man! and consider who it is that liveth in thee. If thou canst truly affirm, "to me, to live is Christ;" happy art thou, as it respects both this world and the world to come. Here, even on earth, let Christ be thy life, that he may be thy life to all eternity: and in order to this, account it the greatest of gain, when thou art enabled to die to the world and to thy own corruptions. Then, in both senses, for thee, to live is Christ, and to die, gain. What indeed can be more profitable or advantageous, than to die, in this respect, to all thy sinful de-

* Phil. i. 21.

sires and affections? Go on then in the Lord, and never faint, allowing Christ to live in thee now, that thou mayest also live with him hereafter.

No man is capable of settled peace and tranquillity, who is distracted and disturbed with earthly desires and designs; therefore, before thou canst live again unto Christ, thou must die to the flesh and to the world. This dying to self and living to Christ may be illustrated by a reference to several types and histories in the Old Testament. Thus, as the promise relative to Christ, and the seal of it by circumcision, were not given to Abraham, until he had quitted his father's house and relinquished his earthly inheritance;* so man, as long as his affections cleave to the world, is unprepared to receive the promise which is by the Saviour; and as long as he refuses to die to it, and deny himself, so long it is impossible he should enjoy Christ, or the things which are His. Jesus can never live in thy soul, until thou art dead to the affections of carnal nature. St. Paul was thus dead; and hence he could say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;"† and writing to the church at Colosse, he says, "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."‡ A man may be considered as dead to sin, when sin dies in him, and he ceases from the commission of it. The same apostle says, "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."§ If we live in Christ, we must walk even as he walked; for it is not sufficient to boast of the spirit in words, while our words are not confirmed by our works; or of faith,

* Gen. xii. 1. and xvii. 10.
† Gal. ii. 20.
‡ Col. iii. 3.
§ Gal. v. 25.

while this is not evidenced by its fruits. Indeed it is said unto *all*,—"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."*

Multitudes, however may be compared to Saul, who, instead of slaying Agag, according to the commandment of God, only cast him into prison. They do not *destroy* their lusts and sinful desires; but are contented to conceal, and as it were imprison them, that at a future opportunity, they may indulge them with the greater secresy. But let us carefully avoid this trifling; and instead of subjecting our corrupt propensities to a temporary restraint, let us lay the axe of mortification to the very root: for unless this be effected, we shall, with Saul, be cast out from the kingdom, and lose the crown of everlasting life.

Some professors of religion resemble trees, the leaves of which fall off when winter approaches, but appear again when the season becomes more favourable and mild; for in the winter of adversity, they conceal their lusts, and restrain their sinful propensities; but when prosperity smiles upon them, they break out again, as at the first, and recruit themselves with further supplies of folly and of vanity. This is a genuine evidence of hypocrisy: for nothing is more hateful to a real Christian than such conduct, who in all circumstances, and under every vicissitude, whether public or private, is always the same, and remains unalterably fixed in his God. He preserves an uniform piety both in prosperity and adversity, in poverty and in affluence, steadily cleaving to God, and meeting with resigna-

* Rom. viii. 13.

tion every affliction that Providence lays upon him.

The history of Ahab furnishes us with another instance, not much unlike the case of Saul; for, in opposition to the command of God, he spared the king of Syria; and, in consequence, sentence went forth against him, and his life was required for that of the captive king.* They who nourish in their breasts those lusts which are the enemies of God and of themselves, and which are appointed to destruction, voluntarily draw upon themselves everlasting death and damnation.

Neither prayer, nor piety, nor any works of the spirit, can ever be perfected in man, without the mortification of the flesh; and in order to represent this, God appointed that every beast which approached the holy mount of Sinai, should be destroyed.† How much more does it behove us to slay our unholy lusts and affections, if we would ever ascend the mountain of the Lord's house, offer up the incense of prayer, or meditate upon the Word of God! If we neglect to do this, we are already judged, and shall be banished for ever from the presence of the Lord.

Jacob served for his beloved Rachel, twice seven years; and love so alleviated his toil, that the years seemed but as so many days: thus, for the salvation of our souls, did Christ Jesus undergo thirty and three years' service, and what Jacob said of himself is, in a most eminent degree, applicable to Him: "In the day, the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from my eyes:"‡ "for the son of man came not to be ministered unto,

* 1 Kings xx. 42. † Exod. xix. 12, 13. ‡ Gen. xxxi. 40.

but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*—Shall we then scruple to love Christ again, and to fight under his banner against his enemy, the world?

CHAP. XIII.

Of Evangelical Love and Self-denial.

"Ye know," says the Apostle, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."—On the one hand, thou art required, O Man! to die to thyself, thy sin, and the world; and, on the other, to lead a holy, harmless life, according to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This thou art to do, not with a view to *merit* any thing at the hands of God, but from a principle of love to him, who performed and merited all for thee, when he made himself poor for thy sake, that thou through his poverty, mightest become rich.

Be not deceived: Jesus must be loved by thee, not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. "If," says he, "a man love me, he will keep my words:"† and so St. John speaks, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not

* Matt. xx. 21. † John xiv. 23.

grievous."* And again, the Saviour says, "My yoke is easy, and my burthen is light."† To him indeed who loves Christ with all his heart, it cannot but be easy to sacrifice the pleasure which earthly vanities afford, and to do that which is good without constraint. Love renders every burden light that is laid upon us by Jesus; whereas to him that is devoid of this heavenly principle, the most trivial thing is grievous and oppressive. To such a one, every religious exercise is painful and laborious; whereas the man who sincerely loves the Lord Jesus Christ, esteems death itself to be in no wise terrible, when submitted to for His sake. And therefore "Unto us," says the Apostle, "it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;"‡ nay, to lay down life itself, whenever that sacrifice is required of us.

In order to the confirmation of thy faith, consider the example of Moses, who "by faith, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."§

Consider Daniel, who refused the delicacies of a court, and desired to be fed with pulse and water, resolving "that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank."‖ He contemned the pleasures of Babylon, that he might attain "the wisdom from above," which dwells only

* 1 John v. 3. † Matt. xi. 30.
‡ Phil. i. 29. § Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. ‖ Dan. i. 8,

in a heart preserved pure from the pollutions of an unholy world. So, if thou desirest that Christ, the eternal Wisdom, should enter into thy soul, thou must abhor the pleasures of sin, and never consent to drink of that wine of fornication which is offered to thee by the spirit of this world. For as Daniel and his companions were rendered more lovely, by their sobriety and abstemious life; so be thou firmly assured, that thy soul will appear more beautiful and fair in the sight of God, even as "partaking of the divine nature," if thou escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust."*

Consider further the example of St. Paul, who says, "The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world;"† that is, I am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me. Thus are all true Christians *in* the world, yet not *of* it. Though they live in it, they do not love it; for they view it as a transient shadow; and its pomps, dignities, and lusts, as vanity and deceit, vexation and disappointment. Hence, they are crucified to the world, though they remain in it; and the world is crucified to them, though they are still tempted and enticed by it: and thus there is an everlasting breach made between both.

How happy is the man, who is dead to earthly vanities, and alive to God; separated from the world, and drawn into Christ! How blessed is he into whose heart divine grace is so infused, as wholly to wean it from inferior objects, and re-exalt it to the fruition of the light and glory of heaven. Such a state is the effect of daily prayer and supplication, without which a true Christian cannot possibly exist.

* 2 Pet. i. 4. † Gal. vi. 14.

When Agur prayed, the Lord was graciously pleased to hear him. "Two things," says he, "have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die. Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me."* So let the Christian pray: "Two things I desire of thee, O Lord, even these two, that I may die to my *self*, and to the *world*; since without this death, it is utterly impossible to be thy true disciple." If thou, O Man! thinkest otherwise, thou certainly deceivest thyself, and shalt at last hear from the mouth of Christ that dreadful sentence, "I know you not."†

Though to die thus to self and to the word, is to flesh and blood a grievous cross, yet will the spirit and the love of Christ eventually triumph over every difficulty and every opposition. So powerful indeed are these aids, that they enable the true Christian to bear all these things for the sake of the beloved, as a pleasant yoke and easy burthen. And although he who lives a life thus mortified, will be hated by the world, yet shall he be loved of God: for the enmity of the world is friendship with Him. And the Lord hath himself declared, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."‡ Those who are dead to it for the testimony of Jesus, the world casts out; but it honours and applauds them who, living in the enjoyment of its pomp and splendour, are its genuine offspring: because they live in the world, and the world liveth in them.

In short, that man is not received and com-

* Prov. xxx. 7, 8. † Matt. vii. 23. ‡ John xv. 19.

mended by the world, but is, on the contrary, cast out of it, in whose heart, pride, covetousness, lust, wrath, revenge, and the other corrupt passions of nature, are mortified and restrained. Unto him the world is dead; and he again is dead to the world: he lives in Christ, and Christ lives in him: and he will be confessed by the Saviour, as one of his *peculiar* people, in whom the great design of redemption has been effected. To others, on the contrary, it will be said, "I know you not, as ye, in like manner, knew me not." You have not confessed me before men, but have been ashamed of my life, my meekness, humility, and patience; and I will not confess you: you have despised the shame of my cross; and you shall be with shame disowned by me. For whoever refuses to live with Christ in time, cannot expect to live with Him in eternity: whoever has not the life of Christ here, shall never have it set forth in him hereafter; and whoever disdains to follow Jesus in the present world, shall never be glorified with Him in the world to come.

Therefore, O Man! strictly scrutinize thy life, and see whether thou bearest a greater conformity to the life of Christ, or to the life of the devil: for thou must inevitably be united to one or other of these throughout all eternity. If thou art dead to thyself and to thy depraved desires within thee, thou wilt find it no hard task to die to the world and its vain allurements without thee: and whoever is thus dead to the world, will not love it or the things which it contains; for, "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."* Again, how

* 1 John ii. 15.

shall his desires any more go out after the world without him, when he is dead to the world within him? Great indeed would be the loss sustained by a lover of the blessed God, were he, in any degree, to yield to the allurements of the world, and allow it to obtain a share in that affection which should be fixed solely on the Supreme Good. A soul so undecided would soon be entirely vanquished by the blandishments of sin, as was Sampson by the charms of Delilah;* and would become subject to all that misery and vexation of heart, which invariably attend the corrupted love of this world.

The love of the world appertains not to the *new* creature, but to the *old*: for the world is made up of nothing but honour and vain glory, riches, pleasures, and carnal desires; with which the old man is familiar and delighted. The new man, on the other hand, has no peace except in Christ, who is his honour and glory, his riches and his heaven. And as nothing can be conceived greater or more exalted than the image of God renewed in Christ Jesus, so it should be our only concern and care, to render ourselves partakers of this sublime dignity; remembering the words of the enlightened TAULER,—"What man possessed of reason, can doubt for a moment, but that God can infinitely more rejoice and delight the heart, than the corrupt and indigent creature is capable of doing?"

In addition to this, the scriptures assure us than man was not created for the world's sake, but the world for man's. It was not to pamper his appetite, to heap up riches, or to extend his empire without limits, that man was formed; it

* Judg. xvi. 6.

was not that he might acquire large estates and possessions, erect palaces, or be gorgeously attired, that he was endued with a soul intelligent and immortal: man was made to be *lord* of the earth, and not its *slave;* to subdue, and not to be subdued. He was not to seek his pleasure and enjoyment on earth, however fair and fascinating to a depraved taste: he was not destined to be an inhabitant of this inferior world, nor the possessor of terrestrial treasures, nor to be actuated by any worldly motive whatsoever. Man is to depart hence, as one that dwells on earth as a *tenant at will.* He was not made for it, and cannot remain in it; he entered it naked, and naked he must quit it again. Many indeed are born into the world at the same time; but an equal number, on the other hand, are daily driven out by death; nor does he allow any to carry with them the least mite of the treasures which they had accumulated upon earth.

Man then is but a guest and a pilgrim below; and most obvious it is, that he was not created for this temporal life, and that this world was never designed to be the *end* of his being. That *end* is God, and the image of God in Christ Jesus, unto which we are renewed by the spirit: and we are created for the kingdom of God and for eternal life. These our blessed Redeemer purchased for us, when they had been forfeited by us; and it is his spirit that regenerates the true Christian, degraded from his primeval dignity, and living without God in the world. How unreasonable therefore is it in man, to fix his affections on temporal objects, when we are assured that the soul is infinitely more noble and more precious than the whole world! How preposterous is it, that he should lavish his time

in the pursuit of earthly things, when he is conscious that he was created to bear the image of God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit! Therefore, let us now solemnly repeat what has been before affirmed, that man was not made for the world, but the world for man.

The excellency of the image of God in Christ Jesus, is inconceivably great and glorious: so that were all mankind to unite their labour and might, their wealth, their honours, and their all, they could not succeed to restore even *one* soul to the possession of this image. It became requisite that Christ himself should die, in order that this divine image which had been utterly defaced by sin, might, through His Spirit, be revived; and that man might again become the temple and house of God through all eternity.

This being duly considered, as certainly it ought to be, how is it that man so thoroughly debases his soul, as to pursue after the things of this world, its honours, its pleasures, lusts, and wealth? He should surely reason with himself, and say,—"Shall I, for the sake of a little gold, for this fading world, or for all the honours and pleasures it can afford me,—shall I, for the sake of *these*, sacrifice my *immortal soul*, which Christ has redeemed at so infinite a price? God forbid." "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* Alas! the "whole world," with all its power and glory, could not avail to rescue one soul from eternal destruction: for the soul is immortal; while the world passeth away, together with all that it inherits.

* Matt. xvi. 26.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Self-love and Self-abhorrence.

"He that loveth his life, shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal."*—Such is the declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in order that a man may thus hate himself, he must, in the first place, cease to love himself; secondly, he must daily die to sin; and thirdly, maintain a continual warfare with his corrupt nature.

There is nothing that more obstructs the everlasting salvation of mankind, than self-love. This is not to be understood of that natural love, which excites to a due regard to self-preservation; but of that carnal and inordinate affection, which influences man to be wholly concerned about *himself*, without any reference to the Supreme Being, the great Author of life.

Man was created to love God *alone*; and since God only is to be loved, it follows, that he who loves himself is an idolater, and makes of himself a god. The heart of man rejoices and rests in the object of his affection; and whatever this be, he is brought by it into bondage, and is *devoted* to it. Man, in this state, is become a servant; and is deprived of that genuine liberty, in the enjoyment of which he was originally

* John xii. 25,

created: and in this lapsed and divided state, he must serve as many masters as there are objects upon which his affections are placed. But if thy love, O Man! be sincerely and simply fixed on God, then thou art subject to no lord but him; and thou preservest thy *liberty*, with all the privileges appertaining to it. It becometh thee therefore to be very circumspect in thy life and conduct, lest thou shouldest in any degree obstruct the progress of divine love in thy soul.

If ever thou desirest to possess God alone, thou must make a surrender of thyself solely to Him. If thou lovest and pleasest thyself, instead of loving and pleasing God, then sorrow and fear, sadness and anxiety, will inevitably attend thee: whereas if thou wholly yieldest thyself unto God, cleaving to him and delighting thyself in him alone, then, he will never leave thee nor forsake thee, but remove by his gracious presence all fear and anxiety from thy mind.

He, on the other hand, who seeks himself in all situations and in every circumstance, and who incessantly pursues after profit, praise, and lust, can never attain to serenity and peace of mind: for some circumstance there always will be, to cross his desires and to disturb his rest. Never, therefore, yield to the belief, that an accession of fame, wealth, or honour, in this world, is always good and profitable for thee; when, on the contrary, a generous contempt of all such transient objects, nay, an utter extirpation of our love of them, would be attended with an infinite blessing and advantage: for it is certain that the love of the world greatly obstructs our growth in the love of God.

As then, on the one hand, the things of this life, such as praise, riches, and pleasure, are

frail, and pass away with the world that supplies them; while, on the other, the love of God endureth for ever; it is evident that no satisfaction can be durable, that is founded upon nothing but the love of self and of earthly objects. Such a rest would be interrupted by every trivial circumstance that occurred: whereas, when the mind is firmly set upon God and upon his love, it cannot fail to be preserved in perfect peace and perpetual serenity, amid all the changes and tempests of this life. Alas! how uncertain, vain, and fugitive, are all things that are not grounded upon God! How do they vanish away, as in a moment, without leaving behind them any solacing effect! Forsake all things, and thou shalt, by faith, recover all things again; for never can the lover of himself and of the world find the blessed God.

Inordinate self-love is begotten of the world, and not of God: it is earthly, and the chief enemy to "the wisdom which is from above." This wisdom does not seek the praise and applause of men: and though in itself "a pearl of great price," yet appearing with no other recommendation than its own native simplicity, it is but little valued in the world, and, with but few exceptions, is entirely neglected and forgotten: and though there are many who make a boast of this wisdom, yet the gem conceals itself from all whose life and manners are not congenial to it. If therefore thou desirest to be possessed of it, O Man! lay aside all that human wisdom which "puffeth up," together with thy self-love and self-applause: and then shalt thou exchange thy earthly wisdom, which the world admires, for that which is heavenly and divine. Then, instead of the wisdom of this world, which in its

nature is elevated and seeks the applause of men, thou shalt be put in possession of a wisdom which far from attracting the notice of the world, is despised and rejected by it; but which is, nevertheless, of divine original and of everlasting continuance.

It is impossible to love God, until thou abhorrest thyself; that is, until thou art heartily displeased with thyself and with thy sins; until thy own carnal nature is crucified, together with the evil propensities of thy self-will. For the more a man strives to love God, the more he labours to subdue the lusts of the flesh and his sensual appetites; and the more he departs from self and from self-love, by the power of the spirit of God, the more nearly he approaches by faith, unto God, and to His divine love. As inward peace much depends on a freedom from desires after the things of this world; so when this peace is once settled in the soul, and the heart has disengaged itself from the ties which bound it to the creature, it returns freely into God, and rests in him alone.

He who is sincerely disposed to deny himself, must certainly follow not his own will but the will of Christ; who has declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."* As though he had said, "Without the way, no man walketh; without the truth, nothing is known; and without life, no man liveth: therefore look upon me who am the way in which it is thy duty to walk, the truth in which thou art called to believe, and the life in which thou art bound to live. I am the inerring way, the infallible truth, and the everlasting life: the way to immortality

* John xiv. 6.

is through my merit; the truth itself is in my word; and life is through the efficacy of my death; and therefore if thou continuest in the *way*, the *truth* will guide thee unto eternal *life*. If thou desirest not to wander, follow me; if thou wilt know the truth, believe in me; and if thou wouldest possess life everlasting, put thy whole trust in me, who for thy sake, have endured the death of the cross." What indeed is the royal way, the infallible truth, and the endless life? What, the way, truth, and life, that are more excellent than every other? Surely there is no way, but the holy and precious merits of Christ; no truth, but his eternal word; no life, but a blissful immortality in heaven.

If therefore, O Christian! thou desirest to be raised up into heaven with Christ Jesus, believe in him here, and tread in the foot-steps of his humility: this is the safe Way to everlasting glory. If thou wouldest escape the snares of the world, take hold of his Word by faith, and follow the example which he has left for thy imitation: because this is the infallible Truth. And if it be thy wish to live with Christ, die with him and in him unto thy sin, and become a new creature: for this is Life. Thus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; and he is so, no less by his example than by his merit: "be ye then followers of God as dear children."* Let us labour and strive after this one point; that our lives may, as nearly as possible, resemble the life of Christ: so that were there nothing else to confound the false Christian, the example of Christ might effectually and abundantly do it.

And truly when we consider that Christ our

* Eph. v. 1.

Lord passed his life in grief and pain, we ought to be ashamed to spend our lives in ease and pleasures. If the soldier forgets his own ease and comfort when he beholds his captain fighting unto death, shalt thou pursue after worldly pleasures and honours, when thy prince and captain was so ignominiously treated, and, for thy sake, nailed to the cross? May I not say that thou dost not, in fact, fight under his banner?

It is true that, in our day, every one desires to be considered a Christian, and expects to be saved by the death of the Redeemer; but how few are they who imitate his life and deportment! Had it been the character of a follower of Christ, to aim at the acquisition of honours and possessions, our Lord would never have enjoined his people freely to bear their *losses*, for the sake of a sovereign and ever-during good. Contemplate the life and doctrine of the blessed Jesus, and thou shalt own that nothing can be more opposed than He and the world. Behold that manger and that stable! do they not forcibly evidence a contempt of worldly things? And will the example of Christ lead thee to err from the right way? No! he is the way, and he is the truth; and his life compared with his doctrine, is the only means to preserve thee from mistake, and to guard thee from the delusions and errors of the world.

Since then the Lord hath chosen to enter into his glory by the way of suffering and contempt, why shouldest thou labour to make thy way to hell, through the pomps and vanities of the world? Return, O deluded soul! escape from the broad way that leadeth unto death, and in which thy only enjoyment is "the pleasure of sin for a season:" enter into this safe Way, in which the

way-faring man shall not stray: cordially embrace that Truth which never can deceive: and live in Him who is Life itself. This way is the truth, and this truth is the way.

Awful blindness! a worm of the earth would make himself great in the world, when the Lord of glory abased himself to the very dust. Be thou covered with the blush of shame, O faithful soul! and when thy bridegroom moves to meet thee clothed with humility, come down from the elevation of thy pride and ambition, and descend into the vale of humiliation to meet thy spouse, and he will embrace and receive thee with joy. As Abraham quitted his father's house, to go into a land which the Lord was to shew him; so quit thou, as a true child of Abraham, the pleasure-house of self-will and self-love, that thou mayest obtain the divine blessing.

Self-love biasses the judgment, blinds the understanding, disturbs the reason, seduces the will, corrupts the conscience, closes the gates of life, and acknowledges neither God nor neighbour. It banishes virtue; seeks after honours, riches, and pleasures; and, in a word, prefers earth to heaven.

He that thus "loveth his life, shall lose it; but he that hateth his life," (that is, resists this principle of self-love,) shall surely "keep it unto life eternal." Self-love is the root of impenitence, and the cause of damnation. They who thirst after self-love and self-honour are destitute of humility and a knowledge of sin: consequently, they never can obtain the remission of sin, though they seek it with tears; their tears not being shed because they have offended God, but merely on account of the personal loss which they have sustained.

The kingdom of heaven is compared in scripture to "a pearl of great price;" in order to obtain which, a man sold *all* that he had. This pearl is God himself, and that eternal life which he has promised, and for the attainment of which every other object must be forsaken. We have an example of this in our Lord Jesus Christ, who descended from heaven not for his own, but for thy sake, not for his own profit and advantage, but for thine. And wilt thou yet delay to love him who gave himself up unto death for thee? It doubtless is the part of a faithful spouse, to please her husband alone; and art thou desirous of pleasing the world, when thou mayest be espoused unto Christ, the great lover of souls? Forsake therefore and sincerely despise all that is in the world, in order that thou mayest become worthy of the eminent dignity of this spiritual marriage: for if thy love cleave not solely to Christ, it is a corrupt love, and not that which a Christian should bear to the Redeemer.

The law of Moses required that the priest should marry a virgin: and Christ, our High Priest, will espouse only a *virgin-soul;* one that is attached to nothing that the world can offer, but solely to himself; nay, one that loves not even herself, in comparison with Christ. "If any man come to me," he says, "and hate not his *own life*, he cannot be my disciple."

In order to understand what is meant by hating ourselves, we are to remember that we carry about with us "the old man," and are indeed the old man himself; whose nature is to hurry from one sin to another, to love himself, to pursue his own profit and honour, and to indulge his own will and carnal appetite. For the flesh is at all times the same; always considering it-

self, easily grieved, envious, bitter, covetous, revengeful, &c. This, O Man! is what thou doest; these sinful motions proceed from thy heart; this is thy very life, even the life of the old man in thee: and therefore thou must of necessity hate thyself, and thine own natural life, if ever thou desirest to be a disciple of Christ. Whoever loves himself, must love his own pride and avarice, his own wrath and hatred, envy and lying, perfidiousness and unrighteousness; and, in short, he must love all the progeny of unholy desires, and a corrupt heart. But if thou ever desirest to be a Christian indeed, thou must not love, nor excuse, nor palliate thy sins, but thou must hate them, and forsake them, and subdue them.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Old and New Man.

It is the charge of the apostle Paul, "Put off the *old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* And in another of his epistles, he gives us a reason for doing so: "Ye are bought with

* Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24.

a price ; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's."* We have already noticed what is meant by the old man ; namely, pride, covetousness, lasciviousness, unrighteousness, wrath, enmity, hatred, &c.; all of which must die in the Christian, if ever the new man arise in him again, and is day by day renewed. In proportion as the old man dies, the new man is quickened. As pride loses its influence, humility, by the grace of God the Holy Spirit, succeeds ; as wrath yields, meekness advances ; as covetousness is done away, trust in God is increased ; and as the love of the world is removed, the love of God necessarily revisits the soul, and becomes more vigorous and ardent.

In this consists the renovation of the new man. These are the fruits of the spirit; this is the practical and living faith; this is Christ in us; this is the new command of Christ, and new obedience ; this is the result of the new birth in us; in which thou must live, or give up the expectation of ever being a child of God; for those only who so live, have a right to be so called. This is the reason why a man ought now to deny himself; to renounce his own honour and will, his own love and pleasure, and all his profit and interest in the world; why he ought freely to give up his own right and life, and consider himself unworthy of every thing that Providence bestows upon him. A real Christian, who is endued with the humility of Christ, readily owns that no man can lay claim to any even the least of those benefits that descend from above; because they are all gifts, and freely proceed from the

* 1 Cor. vi. 20.

goodness of God. On this account, he uses all as the property of another, with fear and trembling; not to promote his own pleasure and satisfaction, his own profit and praise; but from necessity alone, and because he cannot otherwise subsist.

Let a true Christian who denies himself, and a false Christian who is filled with inordinate self-love, be compared together. If an affront be offered to the latter, you may soon behold his anger rising, and visible marks of passion and discontent; and these not unfrequently followed up by reproachful language and actions, by a spirit of revenge, and sometimes by imprecations and curses. All this proceeds from the *old man*, whose proper character it is to be angry and bitter, and to break out into rancour and asperity. On the contrary, he that is a Christian indeed, and has sincerely begun to practice self-denial, is gentle, patient, and easy to be intreated; free from a revengeful spirit; full of compassion and tenderness; and esteems himself worthy of all the sufferings which Providence may be pleased to allot to him. These qualities are all included in *self-denial*, which is the first and initial lesson of a practical Christian.

In the exercise of this patience, meekness, and lowliness of mind, our Lord Jesus Christ has gone before us; who, that he might set us an example, willingly denied himself. "The son of man," he says, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;"* and again, "I am among you as he that serveth;"† and in another place, "The son of man hath not where to lay his head."‡ David, when reviled by Shimei,

* Matt. xx. 28. † Luke xxii. 27. ‡ Luke ix, 58.

practised the duty of self-denial, for his words were, "The Lord hath said unto him, curse David."* As if he had said, "I am a worm in the sight of God, and deserve to suffer far worse things." And thus have all the saints and prophets of God, freely denied their own will, and esteemed themselves unworthy of every blessing. They bore the burden of their day with patience;† they cursed not, when they were cursed; they blessed their persecutors, and prayed for them by whom they were slaughtered:‡ and thus, "through much tribulation, entered into the kingdom of God."§ This was wholly the effect of self-denial, by which they acknowledged themselves worthy of all the evils that could befal them: and this is the cross of Christ which he has encouraged us to bear; saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me."‖

This self-denying life is a severe cross to the "old man;" nay, it is his death and destruction. The natural man desires a life free from restraint and contradiction; and would follow the inclination of his own will; and seek after his own ease and pleasure, rather than the humility, patience, and meekness of Christ, with the other graces of His life and example. But whatever opposition the old may raise for a time, he has received the sentence of death; and if thy soul be ever saved, he must surely die. For never canst thou be clothed with the humility of Christ, unless thy natural pride be first subdued; nor canst thou feel a love of his poverty,

* 2 Sam. xvi. 10. † Acts v. 40, 41. ‡ Acts vii. 60.
§ Acts xiv. 22. ‖ Luke ix. 23.

unless thy avarice and thy love of the world be first removed. Thou will not be able to follow Christ in the contempt of vain-glory, nor to endure the reproach of his cross, until thine ambition be rooted out; nor wilt thou ever express in thy life the meekness, and patience of Jesus, until thy revengeful spirit be inwardly mortified. It is these spiritual exercises that the scriptures mean, when they speak of *denying ourselves, of bearing the cross of Christ*, and of *following Him:* exercises that are submitted to, not with any expectation of profit, merit, reward, interest, or praise, but from pure love to the Saviour, and because Christ hath passed through all before us, and "hath left us an example that we should follow his steps."

Further, as we must allow that the image of God is the greatest dignity of man, so ought we with the more cordiality to practise the duty of self-denial, by which that image, effaced by sin, is revived within us. And as this is the highest honour of which our nature is susceptible, so is it the strongest inducement that can possibly be suggested, to endear to us the practice of self-denial.

Why then should man so eagerly desire the fading honours of this world, which, however they may raise him in the estimation of his fellow-mortals, render him in no degree more acceptable in the sight of God. The great and the wise have bodies composed of the same frail materials as the meanest and the most despised; so that, in this respect, no man has the slightest superiority over another. One is born even as the other; and dies even as the other; for the beginning and end of all men, as to this world, is alike. What folly then is it to covet worldly

honours and the praise of men! Such desires spring from the root of self-love, that bane of the soul, that seed of all spiritual diseases; by which the heart of man is turned from God to the world, and from Christ to *self*. How incapable and how backward is the lover of himself, to obey the words of the blessed Redeemer, and to lose his life for His sake that he may save it. This is a paradox hostile to the inclinations of the "old nature," and therefore but little considered by the bulk of mankind.

Alas! how small is the number of those, who have a thorough knowledge of the depraved life of the old Adam, or who heartily strive against it! and yet if ever we would rescue our souls from perdition, we must die to it and to all its restless workings. Whatever corruptions have been entailed on us by Adam, must be removed in Christ. In his humility, our pride and ambition must expire; in beholding his poverty, our thirst after earthly things must die away. The contemplation of his pungent sufferings should bring down our sensual lusts; the reproaches which he endured, and the entire resignation with which he submitted to the contempt of the world, should restrain us from the pursuits of worldly honours, and from the indulgence of anger and passion.

He who is thus dead to himself, will also readily die to the world, its pomps, and wealth, and honours, and pleasures, solacing himself with those higher riches, dignities, and enjoyments, to which he is admitted by faith in Christ. He becomes, indeed, "a stranger upon the earth," but he is the friend of Christ; and Christ will comfort his heart with the light of his countenance here, and with joy everlasting and unutterable in the world to come.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Strife between the Flesh and Spirit.

THE two opposite principles in the heart of the real Christian, are spoken of by the apostle under different names: viz. *the inward and outward man,** the *law of the mind* and the *law of the members,*† and the *flesh and spirit.* "The flesh," says he, "lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh."‡

When the spirit conquers the flesh, then man lives in the new nature, and is in God and in Christ: but when the flesh vanquishes the spirit, and thus gains the ascendency, then man lives in the devil and in the old nature; he is under the dominion of the world, and without the kingdom of God, and consequently is called *carnal.* And "to be carnally minded is death."§

It is according to the predominance of either of these principles, (the flesh and spirit,) that a man obtains his name in scripture, and is called *carnal* or *spiritual.* When the flesh and its sensual lusts are subdued, it is an indication of the strength of the spirit, and of a man's proficiency in the inward life; but if a man be vanquished by the flesh, it betrays the impotence both of his faith and spirit.

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* 2 Cor. iv. 16. † Rom. vii. 23. ‡ Gal. v. 17.
§ Rom. viii. 6.

Solomon says, "He that ruleth his spirit, (his mind) is better than he that taketh a city."* If then thou desirest to be a valiant conqueror, and to gain an immortal victory, conquer thyself; subdue thy passions, mortify thy pride, quell thine ambition, and totally destroy every inordinate lust with which thou art assailed: and thus shalt thou overthrow the kingdom of Satan, who, by means of such sins, ruleth in the world. Many have signalized themselves by the capture of towns and cities, but, alas! how few are they who, in a higher sense, may be denominated *conquerors of the world!*

If thou consultest thy body excessively, thou destroyest thy soul. It is surely better that the soul overcome, and that the body also be preserved; than that, the body overcoming, both body and soul should be destroyed together. This contest, though attended with various trials and difficulties, will however issue in a glorious victory and a heavenly crown: "Be thou faithful unto death," saith the captain of our salvation, "and I will give thee a crown of life."† And the disciple that lay in his bosom tells us, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.‡" Thou wilt say, what is it to overcome the world? We answer, it is the world within us, which is here principally meant. Overcome thy *self*, and the victory over the world will assuredly be thine.

Some may perhaps be here ready to inquire, "What if sin sometimes closely beset me, and bear me away against my will? must I be excluded from the number of God's children, according to that saying of St. John, "He that

* Prov. xvi. 32. † Rev. ii. 10. ‡ 1 John v. 4.

committeth sin is of the devil?"* To this it must be replied, if thou feelest the conflict of the spirit against the flesh, and art grieved that thou sometimes doest things which thou wouldest not, it is an evidence that, amidst the infirmities which encompass thee, thy faith and thy spirit struggle against the flesh, and are opposed to it. St. Paul himself teaches us that this warfare has place even in pious and believing souls, when he says, "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, (that is, against the inward man,) and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members;"† thus causing him sometimes to do the things which he would not. To will, was present with him; but to perform the good which he willed, he was not always able; inasmuch as he could not do of himself the good which he would, while to do the evil which he would not, was always easy to him. Hence he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"‡ And to this agrees what Christ himself says; "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.§ As long therefore as this *conflict* is felt in a man, sin cannot be said to *rule* in him; for he who is continually fighting against sin, resists its struggles for dominion; and sin cannot damn the man who opposes the attempts which it makes upon the soul.

It is the experience of all the saints, that they alike have sin, according to the word of St. John, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." It is not however the *in-dwelling* sin

* 1 John iii. 8. † Rom. vii. 23. ‡ Rom. vii. 24.
§ Matt. xxvi. 41.

that condemns a man, but the *reigning* sin; since the latter is destructive of the very essentials of Christianity, which cannot be asserted of the former. The sin with which we contend, and to the commission of which we do not consent, is not imputed to us; and "there is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."* But as for those who are altogether strangers to this spiritual strife, this combat of the flesh and spirit, they are not born again, but are under the *reigning* influence of sin; they remain the servants of sin and Satan, and are consequently damned; for "the law of the spirit of life" hath not made them "free from the law of sin and death,"† so long as they thus suffer sin to rule over them, and to "reign in their mortal body."

The remnant of the Canaanites were permitted to dwell amongst the children of Israel, but not to have dominion over them; and thus the Israel of God feel their remaining imperfections, but do not allow them to gain the pre-eminence. To preserve this pre-eminence is the duty of the new man in Christ, who is a true Israelite, and who, as a *prince*, hath power with God, and shall at last prevail. This daily strife with the old man, is an encouraging evidence of the existence of the new man; for it plainly indicates that there are two contending principles in him who is the subject of it. The strength of the spirit and the victory succeeding it, demonstrate the true Israelite; and the warfare of the spirit indicates the real Christian. The land of Canaan cannot indeed be gained without war: but when the

* Rom. viii. 1. † Rom. viii. 2.

flesh, like the Canaanite of old, invades the territories of the spirit, it then becomes the part of the spiritual and true Israel not to submit to the tyrant; but, after serious repentance and remission of sin, to collect new strength, and by the grace of God to rise again from its fall, and earnestly implore Jesus, our true Joshua, to vanquish for him and in him, the spiritual Canaanite, the enemy of his soul. When this is accomplished, the sinner is not only forgiven and restored to favour; but he is likewise refreshed and strengthened in Christ, his great captain in this spiritual combat.

With regard therefore to such as continue to feel many infirmities in the flesh, and who cannot do the things which they would, I exhort them to cleave to Jesus as sincere penitents, and to cover their blemishes with his perfect obedience. It is in this order, and in this order alone, that the imputation of Christ's merits becomes salutary and effectual: that is, when a man forsakes his sin, and by daily repentance strives against it; repairs his former losses, and guards against future temptations. But while the sinner remains deficient in these points, and a stranger to brokenness of heart on account of transgression; while he continues, as far as he can, to gratify the unholy propensities of the flesh, nothing can be more absurd than for him to claim an interest in the atonement made by Christ. How, indeed, is it possible that he should be benefited by the Saviour's blood, whilst, in living a sinful life, he continues to tread it under foot?

CHAP. XVII.

The Inheritance of the Christian not of this World.

THE design of the blessed God in creating temporal things, was that they might assist man in his pilgrimage to another life; and it is right that they should be used with reference to this object, and received at the hands of God with gratitude, attended with fear and trembling. In regard to those things which are not in themselves absolutely necessary, whether riches, food, or raiment, honours, gifts, or natural endowments, they are left to man in order to *prove* him; and that from the manner in which he employs these talents, it may be discovered how he stands affected towards God, while possessed of the goods of this world:—whether, on the one hand, he will still cleave to God, and in the midst of earthly possessions, keep his eye constantly fixed on those which are to come; or whether, withdrawing his love from God, he will attach himself to this mortal life, and prefer a fading earthly paradise, to that which is permanent and heavenly.

Man is therefore left to his own liberty and choice, in order that he may be judged hereafter according to what he has chosen here, and thus be without excuse in that day. Agreeably to this principle, it was the solemn declaration of

Moses to the people of Israel :—" I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing : therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."*

The things of this world must then be designed, not to draw us down to their love, but to lift us up into God ; not to fill us with earthly delight and pleasures, but to be tests and trials of our fidelity. In these trials the fall is very easy, when once we begin to withdraw from God. The pleasures of this world are the fruits of a forbidden tree ; of which we are warned by God not to eat, lest our minds going out after them should eventually take delight in them, and thus play the adulteress, after the manner of those who know no other pleasures, but such as derived from earthly objects. Thus do they prostitute the creatures of God, as meat, drink, and apparel, to the pleasures of the flesh ; and to vain sordid delights, with which the generality of people are too much besotted and carried away.

It certainly is the duty of every true Christian, to esteem himself a stranger and pilgrim in this world ; and as bound to use earthly blessings, not as means of satiating lust or gratifying wantonness, but of supplying their absolute wants and necessities. We ought not to set our affections on these inferior objects, but on him alone who is able to satisfy them. To do otherwise, is to expose ourselves to dangerous temptations. The real Christian is not intent upon worldly concerns, or delicious fare ; for his interior eye is directed to that bread which endureth unto eter-

* Deut. xxx. 19.

nal life. Nor is he solicitous about fine and fashionable apparel; aspiring rather after robes of divine light, and the raiment of glorified bodies. In short, all that pleases the natural man in this world, is to a true Christian only so many crosses and temptations, allurements of sin and snares of death, that continually exercise his virtue. Whatever man usurps without the fear of God, whatever he applies to the mere gratifying of his flesh, cannot fail to operate as a poison to the soul, however pleasant and salutary it may appear to be to the body. Yet, after all, so far from labouring to know the *forbidden tree* of worldly pleasure and its various fruits, man gives himself up to a careless and thoughtless state of life, that so he may with the greater security, feed on the lusts of the flesh, as the natural though dangerous fruits of that tree.

The Christian, on the other hand, uses all things in the fear of God, and as a stranger and pilgrim on the earth; avoiding every kind of excess in meat, drink, apparel, houses, and in the other things of this life, lest, by an improper use of them, he should offend both his father in heaven, and his fellow-Christians upon earth. He will not so much as gaze on the *forbidden tree*, in order that he may not be ensnared; but with the eye of faith, he steadfastly beholds the future felicity of the soul, and for the sake of this felicity, refuses to yield to the cravings of corrupt nature. What does it profit the body that in this world it swims in lusts and pleasures, when, after a short period, it must be devoured by worms, and stripped of all its enjoyments? "Naked," says holy Job, "came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return

again."* We bring into the world a naked and infirm, a poor and indigent body; and even this is the spoil of death, and when we pass out of this world shall be taken from us again.

Whatever we enjoy from the time of our birth to the period of our dissolution, is *all* the bread of mercy and affliction, and designed to supply the bare wants of this mortal life. At the approach of death all is taken from us again, and we depart out of the world poorer than when we entered it. When man enters the world, he is endued with life and body, and finds the necessary shelter, meat, and drink, provided for him: but after existing a short time, he is, in a moment, bereft of all his enjoyments, and leaves behind him even his body and his life. Consider then, Oh man! whether there can be any thing more wretched and poor, more naked and miserable, than a dead person, if he be not clothed with Christ, and enriched in his God.

As therefore we are confessedly strangers and pilgrims here, and at the hour of dissolution, "must leave behind us every earthly enjoyment, let us, at least, cease to encumber our souls with things which we cannot carry out of world, and the use of which is restricted to this life only. Is it not a species of madness to heap up so much riches for a frail body, for a body which we must leave behind us, and which cannot possibly enjoy wealth hereafter? Are we ignorant that there is another and a better world, another body and another life, and that, whatever we may appear in the sight of men, we are in the eye of God only strangers and pilgrims on the earth?

* Job i. 21.

If then we are strangers, it follows that our country and our home must be elsewhere. This will be most evident to us, if we compare time with eternity, the visible with the invisible world, the earthly tabernacle with the heavenly, and things that are frail and perishing, with those that are lasting and eternal. Such a comparison made between contrary objects, will afford us a due insight into time and eternity, and lead us to behold with the eye of faith, such things as remain altogether unknown to the unthinking multitude. It is from the want of this wisdom, this consideration, that so many become lax and disorderly in their manners, wallow in the mire of earthly pleasures, and drown themselves in avarice and worldly cares. It is from the want of this reflection, that the major part of mankind, however keen and shrewd in the pursuits of this world, are blind and insensible to the concerns of the immortal soul. They addict themselves so much to this life, as to esteem it to be the most delightful, the best and noblest of all; while the true Christian, on the contrary, accounts it an exile, a vale of tears, a place of misery, a dungeon of grief.

Hence it is that those who love this world, and seek their happiness in it, do not excel even the brute creation in wisdom or understanding: and as they live, so "they die like beasts."* They are totally blind as it respects the inward man; they do not even think of heavenly and eternal things; they never rejoice in God, but only in the low and sordid pleasures afforded by this world. It is in earthly things that they seek their rest and their enjoyment; and having ob-

* Ps. xlix. 12.

tained their object after much labour and toil, they sit quietly down and congratulate themselves on their possessions. Wretched, miserable men! blind and insensible to the tremendous concerns of their eternal salvation! here, they lie contentedly in the darkness of ignorance, soon to remove hence to that of death and damnation.

In order to our better acquaintance with the nature of our pilgrimage here, we should unceasingly consider the example left us by the Redeemer, and earnestly follow him both in his life and doctrine. He hath set us an unerring pattern of universal holiness. He is our captain and our guide; and to his life and manners, our lives and our manners should be conformed.

Go thou, therefore, and look unto him; unto him who, when the greatest of all men, voluntarily chose that life in which nothing of greatness appeared; a life of meanness, poverty, and contempt of honour, wealth, and pleasure, the *three fold* deity of this world. All these things, to which the world offers sacrifice, the Lord contemned; for it is written, "He had not where to lay his head."*

Such likewise was the character of David; who, before his exaltation to the throne, was poor and despised; and who, when created king, accounted all his regal splendour as nothing compared with eternal life, and the kingdom of God, to which he was called. "How amiable," says he, "are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."—"A day in thy

* Matt. viii. 20.

courts is better than a thousand."* As if he had said, I possess indeed a kingdom, and have people subject to my sway; I possess kingly palaces, and the tower of Sion; but what are all these in comparison of thy tabernacle, O Lord of hosts?

Neither Peter, nor Paul, nor any of the apostles, songht the riches of this life, but directed their attention to those which were laid up in another and better world. Hence they freely espoused the despised life of Christ, walking in his charity, lowliness, and patience; contemning the earth, and triumphing over the world, its snares, and its allurements. They prayed for those who cursed them; they thanked those who reproached them; they blessed those who reviled them. When they were persecuted, they glorified God; when scourged, they were immoveably patient, professing that "through much tribulation they were to enter into the kingdom of God;"† and when slaughtered, they prayed (with Christ their head) "Father, forgive them;"‡ and with his first martyr, "Lay not this sin to their charge."§ Thus were they, on the one hand, dead to all wrath and revenge; to bitterness, ambition, and pride; to the love of the world, and of their own life also; while, on the other, they lived in Christ and in his love, in his meekness and humility, his patience and his resignation. And thus were they made alive in Christ by faith.

To a lover of the world, this excellent way of life is entirely unknown; for with regard to those who do not live in Christ, nor know that the

* Psal. lxxxiv. † Acts xiv. 22.
‡ Luke xxiii. 34. § Acts vii. 60.

truth is in him, these are still dead in their sins; dead in wrath and hatred, in envy and avarice, in pride and revenge: and as long as they so continue, they are in a state of impenitence, and have not been quickened by faith in Jesus, be their boasting what it may. But the genuine disciples of Christ know it to be a duty to tread in the steps of their divine Master, and to be conformed to his life, as the supreme and original pattern of all virtue and goodness. In a word, the life of Christ is their exemplar; he himself is their *book*, whence they derive all solid and substantial learning, as it respects both life and doctrine. Such persons declare with the apostle, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."* And with all the holy ancients they unite in saying, "Here, we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."†

If then from a review of all these considerations, it evidently appear, as it surely does, that in this world we are strangers and have no abiding place, it follows that we were not created for the sake of earthly things as the ultimate end of our being; but that there remains for us another country, and other dwellings, to gain which we ought not to hesitate to sacrifice a hundred worlds, nor even life itself. These are thoughts upon which the true Christian continually meditates; and it is his joy that here he has no continuing city, but is created for life eternal. Nor is he insensible to the madness of those

* 2 Cor. iv. 8. † Heb. xiii. 14.

who, occupied wholly in pursuing the things of this life, lade their souls with "the thick clay" of worldly vanities, and thereby expose them to endless perdition.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Madness of preferring Things Temporal to Things Eternal.

MANY there are, in our day, who, under cover of religion, seek after earthly and carnal things; who use more diligence to become great and affluent by the gospel, than to be good and happy. They love "the praise of men, more than the praise of God."* They choose rather to gratify the flesh in its sinful propensities, than to bring it down into true repentance and brokenness of spirit. But the character of the true Christian is of an opposite kind. *He* is more concerned about eternal than temporal things; he seeks the glory that endureth, more than that which passeth away; he thirsts after heavenly and invisible riches, and not for those that are earthly and visible. In short, he mortifies and crucifies the flesh, in order that the spirit may live.

The sum of Christianity is *to follow Christ.*

* John xii. 43.

Hence, it should be our chief care to imitate the example which he has left us. Our thoughts and actions, our desires and labours, should all terminate in the attainment of this *one thing needful*, how we may come to Christ; how be saved by, and united with him to all eternity. Never should we lay aside the memory of that endless felicity to which we are called; but cheerfully await the dissolution of our earthly bodies, and a translation to that inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us.

By these means, which habituate the soul more and more to the presence of God, there is begotten in man a holy thirst after eternal things; while a desire after earthly objects, which is insatiable in its nature, is at the same time powerfully restrained. This is taught by St. Paul in that excellent precept, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."* The *name* of God, in which all things are to be done, is the honour, praise, and glory of God. To this great end of human life, all our works should tend; for then it is that they are done in God, and will follow us into a blessed eternity.

In a word, Almighty God, our chief and sovereign good, should be the *principle* and *end* of all our designs, if we would not fail of eternal salvation. Hence St. Paul says, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things;"† namely, covetousness and the love of the world. He calls the Christian, "a man of God," because he is born of God, and lives in God, and therefore is the son and heir of God: as, on the other hand,

* Col. iii. 17. † 1 Tim. vi. 11.

a man of the world, is one who lives in a conformity to the world, who "has his portion in this life, and whose belly is filled with the hid treasures" of the earth.* From these snares the Christian is required carefully to flee, and to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; and to lay hold of eternal life, whereunto he is called. When a man refuses to be guided by these salutary maxims, he falls of necessity into every kind of enormous and presumptuous sin, and will at last be punished with eternal fire.

Inundations and war, famine, pestilence, fire, and earthquakes, are, it should be remembered, punishments inflicted by a God provoked to anger on account of our preferring things temporal to things eternal; and because we are more careful of a weak and perishing body, than we are of an imperishable, immortal soul. And surely this is the highest pitch of ingratitude, and an open contempt of the blessed God, deserving to be visited with punishments both here and hereafter: for by such conduct, man lays aside an almighty, eternal Being, from whom he derives both his body and his soul; and converts an impotent creature into an idol, to which he surrenders his love and affection. He who loves the creature more than the creator, and things transitory more than those which are eternal, offers surely the highest possible affront to his Maker, and opposes the great design of the Christian religion. What can we expect will be the consequence of this inordinate attachment to the world? What, but destruction and hell-fire?

It cannot be denied but that all the creatures

* Psal. xvii. 14.

of God are good in themselves; but when men begin to set their affections on them, and by their irregular love to convert them, as it were into idols; they then become an abomination in the sight of God, and are justly ranked among the most odious images of gold and silver. In short, the love and joy, the wealth and honours of the true Christian, are circumscribed only by eternity itself; for, "where his *treasure* is, there will his *heart* be also."* From the lust and love of the world, on the contrary, nothing can result but death and damnation. "The world passeth away and the glory of it, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever:"† and hence, St. John calls upon the faithful entirely to withdraw their affections from the world; saying, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."‡ These and similar considerations powerfully convince us, that God will not have us fix our affections on any creature whatsoever. But this will more fully appear from the following reflections:—

1. Love is the very *heart* of a man, and the noblest of all his affections; hence, it is due to God only, as the prime and supreme object.

2. It is consummate folly to love that which cannot love us; whereas the infinitely blessed God deserves to be loved alone, since from a pure principle of love, he created us unto eternal life, and hath to the same purpose, redeemed and sanctified us.

3. *Like* things are naturally loved by their *like*. Hence God made us after his own image, in order that we might love him; and that, next

* Luke xii. 34. † 1 John ii. 17. ‡ 1 John ii. 15.

to himself, we might love our neighbour, created after the same image.

4. The human soul resembles a mirror, representing every object indifferently that is placed before it, whether it be of heaven or of earth. Therefore turn thy soul wholly and only to God, that this image may be fully expressed in it.

5. The patriarch Jacob, when dwelling in Mesopotamia, amongst strangers, and far removed from his native soil, at length, after twenty year's service, demanded his wives and wages; and excited by the sweet recollection of the place of his nativity, returned thither again. Just so should thy soul, amidst the various engagements of this life, and the hurry of outward employments, long without ceasing after that blissful country for which Providence designs us.

6. Man is made either better or worse by that which he loves. He that loves God, partakes freely of the divine virtue and goodness that resides in Him; but he that loves the world, is defiled with all those sins and evils which attend it.

7. When King Nebuchadnezzar was too much devoted to the love of the world, he lost the very form of a man, and degenerated into that of a beast. So all men, blotting from their hearts the image and love of God, are transformed, as it respects their inward man, into the nature of brutes. For surely those who wholly surrender themselves to the love of this world, are no better.

8. Lastly, that which a man has loved here, and carried about in his heart, shall be manifested in him hereafter; and with this he shall associate himself for ever, whether it be God or

the world. If the world have been the object of his love in this life, it will never leave him hereafter, but will prove his death and his tormentor to all eternity.

CHAP. XIX.

The Blessedness of a Broken and Contrite Spirit.

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."* These comfortable words, our gracious and merciful God, hath spoken by the prophet, in order to cheer our hearts, when they are most oppressed with misery and sorrow. Be not thou therefore ashamed to be bruised in spirit, and abased in thine own eyes. Humble thyself to the dust, and deem thyself unworthy of all grace and favour; so shalt thou be raised out of thine own vileness, and obtain, in Christ, acceptance with Almighty God.

He, therefore, who is still *something* in his own estimation, is not duly humbled and depressed in his heart; nor can he expect to be regarded by that Being who looks upon the poor and contrite ones only. "If," says the Apostle,

* Isa. lxvi. 2.

"a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself:"* and the reason of this is, that God is *all in all*, *alone;* and the creature must consequently become a bare and empty *nothing*. So great and so practical is this truth, that man is not only to believe it in his heart, but to express it in his life and conduct.

If ever thou designest then to give up all glory and all honour to God, that HE may be ALL, alone, thou must surely thyself become *nothing* in thine own eyes; and entertain a very low opinion of thyself, and of thy profiting in spiritual things. For how is it possible that God should be *all in all*, whilst thou thyself continuest to be *something?* By this self-exaltation, thou invadest the sovereignty of God, and appropriatest that to thyself, which is his proper due and prerogative.

A man that will be *something*, is the matter out of which God is want to make *nothing:* and he, on the contrary, who loves to be reputed as nothing, and who, in his own judgment, is so, is the matter out of which the Almighty maketh something. He that will be wise in his own opinion is the matter out of which God maketh a fool; and he who is truly sensible of his own folly and nothingness, is that of which God forms a wise and great man. He who, before the Lord, sincerely confesses himself to be the worst and most miserable of men; is, in the estimation of God, the first and greatest of all men. He who believes himself to be the chief of *sinners*, shall be honoured by the Lord as the chief of *saints*.

* Gal. vi. 3.

This is that humility which God exalts: that misery which he regards; that *nothing* from which he createth *something*. And as at the creation, the glorious frame of heaven and earth was brought forth out of nothing; so must man be reduced to a deep sense of his vileness and nothingness, if ever he be exalted to glory and to dignity.

Reflect upon the example of David, who, when despised by Michal his wife for dancing before the ark of the Lord, declared that he would be "base in his own sight;"* and with whose self-contempt and humility God was so well pleased, as to make him an astonishing instrument of promoting his own glory. Consider again the example of Jacob, who confessed, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies." But above all, lay to heart the example of Christ, the grand and blameless pattern of a Christian. He was abased below the meanest of men; was made a worm and a curse for our sake. But the lower he sunk, the higher did he afterwards rise, when he received a name which is above every name.

But who is that blessed and lowly one who is *nothing* in his own eyes? It is he who inwardly and in his heart esteems himself worthy of no divine benefit, whether bodily or spiritual. For he that arrogates any thing to himself, esteems himself to be *something;* and is therefore the farthest removed from divine grace and from this new creation. So destructive is the spirit of self, that it renders even grace of no effect, and shuts out that which contains all things in it. For if a man judge himself worthy of any thing, he then does not take all things as a free gift from

* 2 Sam. vi. 22.

the hands of God. Whatever we are, however, is of *grace* and not *merit;* nor has any man a propriety in any thing at all, except in his wretchedness.

A man considered in himself, that is, independently of God, by whom he subsists, is no more than a shadow. And as the shadow of a tree constantly follows the motion of the tree from which it depends, so should man follow the motion of God from whom he has his very life and being; and thus become a shadowy representation of God. It is true, the fruit will sometimes appear in the shadow of the tree, yet it does not therefore belong to the shadow but to the tree: so all the good fruits that may appear in thy life and conduct, are not the produce of thy own self and capacity, but of God alone, who is the original source whence all good fruits proceed. And as the apple grows not from that gross substance which is seen by the eye, but from the seminal virtue which the tree contains, and with which it is impregnated from above; so the new man, and the fruit he bears, spring not up from any thing that is gross and visible to the eye, but from a supernatural and invisible seed grafted upon the mind.

Thus is man by nature a fruitless and dry tree; but God is his strength, whereby life is renewed in him, and he himself is made fat and green in the house of God. God is the "strength of our life,"* says the prophet: and hence we "shall bring forth much fruit whilst we abide in Christ."†

When a man is thus wretched and poor in his own eyes, and has nothing in the world on which to trust but the pure grace of God, manifested in

* Psal. xxvii 1. † John xv. 5.

Christ Jesus, then God graciously "looks upon him." This divine regard must be understood in a divine sense. The look or countenance of God, is not as the countenance of men, destitute of life and virtue: but it is accompanied with a real power and influence that supports and revives the faint and penitent sinner. And as none but humble and contrite hearts are capable of this heavenly regard; so the more clear and blessed it is, the less do they think themselves worthy of it. Such a one deems himself unworthy of all blessings divine and temporal. He is ashamed to receive any divine comfort, be it ever so little; and says with Jacob, "I am less than the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant:" for behold, since thou gavest me thy son, I come with two bands, with the blessings of grace and of glory.* And truly, if a man should weep a sea of tears, it were by no means sufficient to purchase the least part of heavenly comfort: the grace of God cannot be merited by men, who deserve nothing but wrath and eternal damnation.

Whoever thus acquaints himself with his own worthless life and condition, is truly one of those poor and contrite objects, to whom the Lord graciously looks. Without this previous brokenness of heart, man cannot expect to enjoy this blessed aspect of God, nor indeed that sweet grace and kindness which is promised to the poor in spirit only. In this weakness and poverty the apostle glories, when he says: "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities:"† and he adds

* Gen. xxxii. 10. † 2 Cor. xi. 30.

the reason: "that the power of Christ may rest upon me."* For so great indeed is the mercy of God, that he will not see the work of his hands destroyed: but the weaker the creature is in itself, the more is it sustained by the power of an Almighty Being. For in the weakness of the creature, the power of God is exalted, as the Lord declared unto Paul: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

The more vile and abject therefore a Christian is in his own opinion, the more freely God looks upon him, to the greater manifestation of the riches of his glory. And in bestowing this heavenly consolation, he does not look at all on man's merit, but barely on his want and poverty. And this comfort can in no degree be compared with any human comfort, all which it infinitely exceeds.

By "the poor and contrite man," mentioned by the prophet, is not to be understood, a man that is poor in the outward sense of the word, and who is altogether destitute of human help and relief; but *he* is the poor man, who labours under the load of his sins, and is grieved for them. If sin were not in the world, there could be no misery: but now so much misery cannot befal a man, but that he is still worthy of much more. Far be it therefore from us to grieve, because we have not many temporal benefits conferred upon us; since we are not worthy even of the least of them, no not of life itself. Nature may think this a hard saying; yet every penitent sinner ought to be a severe judge against himself, and not to make the least allowance to his carnal

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

propensities. And this is the order in which we are to obtain God's favour and mercy.

And what has man now left to boast of, or with what language shall he open his mouth? The best course he can take will be to say: "Lord, I have sinned; have thou mercy upon me!" And truly God himself requires no more of a man than that he humbly deplore his sin, and in the unfeigned language of repentance crave pardon: and whoever neglects this may be said to have slighted the best and most needful part of his life. Weep not therefore, O Man! on account of thy body, that it is naked and sick, pinched with hunger and cold, insulted and persecuted; or because it is confined by bonds and a prison: but humble thyself before the Lord, and bewail the woeful condition of thy soul, which is constrained to dwell in so wretched a house as thy body is, a house of bondage and misery. "Wretched man," says the apostle, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* This free and Christian acknowledgement of thine own inward misery, this godly sorrow, this thirst after divine grace, this faith leaning on Christ alone, opens in Christ the door of grace, by which God enters into thy soul. "Be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand," saith the Lord, "at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me:"† which supper is nothing else but the full remission of sin, attended with heavenly comfort, with life and happiness. This is the sacred door of faith, through which the Lord, at his own time, enters

* Rom. vii. 24. † Rev. iii. 20.

into the soul ; and after the day of toil and sorrow is over, refreshes her with the light of his countenance. Then it is, that " mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other ; that truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven."* Then it is that the woman, that great sinner, but now a returning penitent, anoints the feet of her Lord, washes them with tears, and wipes them with the hairs of her head, expressing thereby all the marks of an unfeigned and deep humility. Then it is, that the spiritual priest, in the holy ornaments of faith, offers up the true sacrifice, even a broken and lowly spirit, with the incense of true contrition and prayer.

And thus, O Christian ! is seen how by the sense of thy own misery, and by faith in Christ attending it, thou mayest attain the grace and favour of God. To conclude, the more wretched and miserable any one is in his own judgment, the more dearly he is beloved of God, and the more gracious is the regard which the Lord will at last bestow upon him.

* Psal. lxxxv. 10, 11.

CHAP. XX.

By true Contrition, the Life of a Christian is daily amended, and he is thereby made more meet for the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Godly Sorrow worketh Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of: but the Sorrow of the World worketh Death."——2 *Corinth. vii.* 10.

True Christianity consists solely in pure faith, love, and a holy life. This holiness of life springs from true repentance, sorrow, and self-knowledge; so that a man not only more and more feels his failings and imperfections, but amends them also, and, in this order, partakes of the righteousness and holiness of Christ by faith.

But in order to regulate the grand work of salvation with the better order and care, thou oughtest now to walk in a submissive and filial fear of God, guarding against all manner of licentiousness, to which the bent of thy flesh is apt to excite thee. "All things are lawful," says the apostle, "yet all things are not expedient."* As a dutiful child, confined to the father's house, does not so much as attempt to follow his own humour in every thing; but unwilling to offend his parent, warily observes his will and pleasure: so a true Christian and child of God will behave himself in *his* Father's house,

* 1 Cor. vi. 12.

(which is the church) in so careful a manner, as not to allow his senses any unlawful liberty. He will neither do nor speak any thing without consulting first his Father in heaven, under whose eye he constantly lives, knowing that He is every where present.

Notwithstanding this however, it is certain that most men live without any fear of God, freely indulging themselves in worldly pleasures and satisfaction. They will not consider that it is far better to have a constant fear of God fixed in the heart, than a constant joy of the world. For as the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and begets a serious frame of mind; so the joy of this world extinguishes all good impressions, and banishes true wisdom out of the heart, together with all godly fear and devotion.

By daily repentance and mortification of the flesh, man is daily renewed in God's image; for "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day:"* and often in the midst of his sorrows, is he visited with a taste of heavenly joy and sweetness. Whereas the pleasure and joy of the world, are always attended with heaviness of heart, and an inward sting of a wounded conscience. If people were but more sensible of the melancholy effect resulting from worldly pleasure, and particularly of that damp it puts upon heavenly comfort, they would certainly dread all loose and worldly enjoyments; since thereby the grace of devotion is quenched, and the soul diverted from those purer and more exquisite pleasures which the gospel of Christ affords.

* 2 Cor. iv. 16.

There are two things, which whoever seriously considers, cannot be much affected either with worldly pleasures, or outward calamities. The one is, *the inexpressible pain of the damned* from a consideration of the eternity of hell-torments; which whoever earnestly ponders, will almost find it impossible to be thoroughly merry after the way of the world. The other is, *the eternal joy of the blessed in heaven.* Whoever has a sound apprehension of so happy a state, will never be greatly moved with the calamities of the present life. And this from the consideration of the eternity of those divine enjoyments. But so great is the levity of our hearts, that it hinders us from any serious reflection on so important a subject. And hence it is no wonder we are both without this wholesome contrition and sorrow; and ignorant of all celestial joys and comforts.

It is the prerogative of a true Christian, to be on the one hand but sparingly, if at all, moved with earthly things, or temporal advantages: and on the other, to be the more deeply impressed with the joys of God, and of life eternal. Neither is he immoderately dejected in the present adversities that may befal him; but the loss of a soul grieves him to his very heart, and he counts it worthy of long lamentation. As for the perishing comfort of this life, he knows it cannot be called a loss, since he shall receive a thousand-fold for it in the world to come. But when a soul is once cast away, he thinks her irrecoverably lost to all ends and purposes.

Blessed then is the man who is affected with this godly sorrow, and tastes that celestial consolation which succeeds it. But alas! how much of our time do we spend in worldly joy and

merriment, when we have greater reason to bewail our own misery and that of others! How often do we burst forth into loose and immoderate laughter, when we ought rather to weep over that sin and corruption which every where abound: since there is no true liberty, no solid delight, no substantial satisfaction, but in the fear of God, and in a quiet, serene conscience. But this blessing can never exist without faith, and without a holy life and conversation. This faith, attended with godly sorrow, daily proceeds more and more to correct our faults and imperfections. Whoever neglects this constant reform of his life and manners, wastes the most precious part of his time, which he should employ to secure the interest of his immortal soul. He is an adversary to the new life, he hinders the kingdom of God in himself, and he can never be cured of the blindness and hardness of his heart, so long as he remains in that state.

It follows therefore, that he only deserves the name of a prudent and wise man, who seriously declines whatever he understands to be an obstacle to the reforming of his life, and to the improving of himself in heavenly gifts and graces. Happy is he who not only avoids such things as are detrimental to his body and estate, but also detests those which hinder the soul in her spiritual progress.

Be therefore courageous, O Man, and endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ! An evil habit of mind must be overcome with a good one. It is the apostle's exhortation: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."* The cure of thy soul is not impossible. View,

* Rom. xii. 21.

in the first place, thy own corruptions, and judge them severely, before thou presumest to censure the faults of thy neighbour. Be not too forward in admonishing and correcting others; but endeavour to heal first thy evils at home, before thou enterest upon the reforming of those that are abroad.

Go on therefore, O Christian, and learn the lesson of daily repentance, sorrow, and contrition of heart. If the world despise thee upon that account, and decry this wholesome exercise as error and as melancholy, be not concerned at such poor and empty reflections. Grieve rather that thou art called indeed a Christian, but that thou has not yet arrived at that strictness of life and purity of manners, which the gospel requires. Bear the contempt of the world with Christian constancy, and consider the singular benefit which thence accrues to the whole practice of true religion. For, if thou be scorned by the world, then God is ready to support thee by fresh supplies of life and comfort, according to his own declaration: "I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."*

It is impossible that divine and worldly joy, should, at one and the same time, reside in the heart of man; so very contrary are they to each other, and so inconsistent in their *natures*, *causes*, and *effects*. The joy of the world is begotten in prosperity; but that, which is from heaven, springs up in the midst of crosses and adversities.

* Isai. lvii. 15.

It is true, that it is against the bent of nature to rejoice in the time of adversity, as the apostle himself seems to intimate: "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."* But then it is no less true, that the grace of God repairs our nature, and cleanses and qualifies it for such spiritual exercises. And it was after this change that the apostles rejoiced, because they were "counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ."†

A Christian is become by the grace of God, a new creature, and hence the tribulations incident to this life are made easy to him. The apostle declared, that he even "gloried in tribulation."‡ As affliction is a grievous burden to the old man, so it gives ease and joy to the new. Again, that joy which is from above infinitely surpasses that which is from below. Nay, the very reproach and contempt which a Christian undergoes for the sake of Christ, is attended with a secret satisfaction: and the reason we are so little affected with these heavenly visitations, is on account of the joy of the word, to which we are still too much addicted.

A truly humble man thinks himself worthy of all manner of sufferings, and unworthy of any divine comfort: but the more unworthy he thinks himself in true brokenness of spirit, the more is he visited with the goodness of God. And the more he weeps over his sin, the more is he weaned from worldly enjoyments; for the whole world gradually becomes to him a burden and a bitter affliction.

A man that seriously views himself and his

* 2 Cor. vi. 10. † Acts v. 41. ‡ Rom. v. 3.

inward condition, finds more reason to mourn than to rejoice. And when he takes a survey of the lives of others, he will undoubtedly meet with abundance of objects worthy of pity or of compassion, rather than of hatred and envy. Why did Christ weep over Jerusalem, even over that Jerusalem which persecuted and murdered him?* Truly their sin and blindness was the evident cause of it. And in this he has also left us a pattern, and *feelingly* taught us, that nothing in the world should more powerfully melt us into tears and compassion, than that impenitence and carnal security which every where abound.

Did a man as often revolve in his mind, that he must certainly die, and appear before the judgment-seat of God, as he thinks on the concerns of this life, and how to provide for them, surely he would be abundantly more serious in his conversation, more diligent in the reformation of his life, and more fervent in all the duties of repentance. Did he moreover call to mind the unspeakable torments of hell, succeeding, as they do, a short enjoyment of sin; this consideration would imbitter to him the sweets of this world, and in comparison, render all the afflictions of this life, pleasant and easy to him. But alas! the enticements of the flesh are so strong and prevalent, and our compliances in their favour, so forward, that we seldom yield to such serious reflections as these.

Upon the whole, this should be a Christian's daily consideration: if his body be pampered in lust and luxury; if the flesh be humoured and gratified in its inordinate cravings; then the

* Luke xix. 41.

life of the spirit loses its vigour, and if not seasonably supported, will pine away into death and destruction. Whereas, if the flesh be crucified with its lusts and desires, the spirit lives and gathers strength. One is the death of the other.* If, therefore, the spirit shall live in thee, then thy body must be certainly made a spiritual sacrifice, † and must spiritually die to the world, and to all conformity with it.

This has been the constant practice of all the saints, from the beginning of the world until now. They have with thanksgiving eaten and drank the bread and cup of tears, according to that declaration of David: "Thou feedest us with the bread of tears, and thou givest us tears to drink in great measure." ‡ And in another psalm: "My tears have been my meat day and night." ‖ Again, "I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping." § This, I say, has been the "daily bread" of all the saints to this day; yet it has, however, been sweetened to them, *faith* being mixed with it. This is that godly "sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of." ¶

But as this godly sorrow is attended with life and happiness, so the "sorrow of the world works death" itself. ** This kind of sorrow arises from the loss of honour, of temporal goods and estates, and other things of that nature. This sorrow has proved so fatal to many, that they have laid violent hands on themselves, and procured their own ruin and death by various contrivances. Of this there are not wanting many examples in the history both of Pagans and Christians: though in-

* Gal. v. 24. † Rom. xii. 1. ‡ Psal. lxxx. 5. ‖ Psal. xlii. 3. § Psal. cii. 94. ¶ 2 Cor. vii. 10. ** 2 Cor. vii. 10.

deed the latter ought better to understand the maxims and doctrines of Christ, who has abundantly taught us, not to set our hearts on *objects so frail and perishing*. For what is the loss of a handful of fading things, to the life of a man, with which all the goods of this world cannot be compared?

Be not, therefore, cast down by the loss of temporal goods, which, by the very laws of nature we can enjoy but a little while: but lay the more to heart those incorruptible riches, that are laid up in the world to come; and do whatever thou canst to prevent the loss of them. Death will strip thee at last of all worldly possessions. Here shall be an end of pomp and greatness. This law of death is equally given to all, and the penalty of it attaches to all alike. The greatest king is seized on the throne, and the meanest beggar on the dunghill; for as the body of the one is, so is also the body of the other: both putrify and turn alike to corruption. Nevertheless, the Lord will remove at length the veil of the shadow of death, which is spread over all nations, and will "swallow up death in victory,"* and "wipe away all tears from our eyes. †

Let these and the like considerations, induce thee patiently to bear the loss of earthly things; remembering that the whole world does not come up to the price of one soul, for which Christ vouchsafed to die. The more thou withdrawest thy heart from temporal goods and estates, the less will it affect thee, when thou shalt be obliged one way or other to leave them. Thy grief will undoubtedly be the greater, the

* Isa. xxv. 8. † Rev. vii. 17.

more thy love has been wrapped up with them. Thus does the "labour of the foolish weary every one of them;"* as the wise man expresseth it.

This is the unhappy state into which the children of this world plunge themselves. They hoard and amass their goods with assiduous pain and labour; they possess them with fear and anxiety of mind; and quit them at last with grief and groans, when they can no longer enjoy them. This is the "sorrow of this world," which begets no less an evil than *death* itself.

We read, that such as adored the beast "had no rest:" † so they that adore the great and toilsome beast of sordid and earthly Mammon, may be said to have no rest, day nor night. This description of men, most wretched and most unquiet as they are, may be fitly compared to camels, or mules. These animals, traversing rocks and hills, and carrying gold and silver, silken garments and pearls, spices and wines, draw many attendants with them for their better security: but at night, when they are stabled, all their precious ornaments, their embroidered garments and vestments, are taken from them, and they being weary and stripped, appear to be what indeed they are, poor and miserable beasts of burden. Nothing is now seen upon them, but the prints of their stripes, and the marks of the blows which they received upon the road. So, in like manner, that man, who in this world shone in gold and silks, in "purple and fine linen," ‡ when the day of his death is come, has nothing left but the prints and scars of a

* Eccl. x. 15. † Rev. xiv. 2. ‡ Luke, xvi. 19.

wounded conscience, contracted by the abuse of such riches as were committed to his trust.

Therefore, O man! learn to relinquish this world, before it relinquishes thee. If thou break not with the world, the world will break with thee, and leave horror and anguish behind it. Whoever sequesters his soul from the world, before he quits the world with his body, he can joyfully die; since he is loosed from the ties which bound him to these inferior objects. As the Israelites, when they were just about to leave the land of Egypt, were daily afflicted with greater burdens by Pharaoh, who designed to destroy them, and if possible, utterly to extirpate their progeny ;* so the infernal Pharaoh envying our eternal salvation, when we are now upon the very borders of life everlasting, still attempts to load us with more of the concerns of this life, and thereby to obstruct our passage into a better.

It is certain we cannot carry with us the least dust of all our earthly possessions into the kingdom of heaven. Nay, our very body must be left behind us until the day of resurrection. If we know any thing, we know that the way leading to life is so very *strait*, as to strip the soul entirely of any thing that will hinder her passage. "Narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it."† As the husbandman separates the wheat from the chaff, so death frees the soul from all the chaff and trash of this world, from all riches, and greatness, and worldly attire, which now, like the chaff, are driven away.

Go therefore, O man, and seriously ponder in thy mind what the Apostle declares: "*Godly*

* Exod. v. 9. † Matt. vii. 14.

sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." *

CHAPTER XXI.

Of the true Worship of God.

"THE sons of Aaron offered strange fire before the Lord, and there went out fire from the Lord and devoured them." † This fire is called *strange*, because it was different from that which continually burned upon the altar, and with which, according to the command of God, the burnt-offerings were consumed. It is, therefore, a type of false worship: and the sons of Aaron deserved to be destroyed with avenging flames, because they violated the divine precept.

This marked displeasure of the most jealous and righteous God, is in like manner provoked by those who, from the motion of their own unregenerate mind, and from a singular presumption of devotion or religious sanctity, introduce a new and peculiar worship of God; which, not being enjoined by himself, provokes his indignation, anger, and vengeance; because "God is a consuming fire." ‡

In order that *we* may not incur the wrath of the divine majesty, let us consider wherein the true worship of God consists: for the punishment of temporal fire, inflicted on false worship under the *Old* Testament, is to us a proof, that the Lord will also under the *new* dispensation,

* 2 Cor. vii. 10. † Lev. x. 1, 2. ‡ Deut. iv. 24—Heb. xii. 29.

take the severest vengeance on all strange worship, not only with everlasting, but also with temporal fire, wars, desolations, and effusion of blood.

To true, spiritual, internal, Christian worship, there are three things required. 1. *The true worship of God.* 2. The *knowledge of sin*, accompanied with unfeigned repentance. And 3. *The knowledge of grace*, attended with remission of sin.

The *knowledge of God* consists in faith, which apprehends Christ, and in him, and through him, knows God, his omnipotence, love, mercy, righteousness, truth, wisdom; all which are God himself. For what is God? Surely no other than pure omnipotence, pure love and mercy, pure justice, truth, and wisdom. And the same is to be said of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.

But whatever God is, he is not to himself only, but also to *me*, by his gracious will, made manifest in Christ Jesus. Thus *to me* is God omnipotent; *to me* he is merciful; *to me* eternal righteousness through faith and remission of sins. *To me* also he is everlasting truth and wisdom.

Thus is it also with Christ. He is made *to me* eternal omnipotence, the almighty Head, and Prince of my life, my most merciful Saviour, everlasting love, unchangeable righteousness, truth, and wisdom; according to that scripture of the Apostle: "Christ is of God made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." * All which is also verified of the Holy Spirit, who is *my* eternal love, righteousness, truth, and wisdom.

* 1 Cor. i. 30.

This is the true knowledge of God, which consists in faith. It is not some empty and speculative science, as people imagine; but a cheerful, lively, and effectual reliance on God, in which I feel the rays and influences of the divine Omnipotence really descending upon me, so that I perceive how I am upheld and preserved by him; how "in him I live, move, and have my being."* I must also taste the riches of his goodness and mercy. Is not that which the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, have done for thee, for me, and for us all, the effect of pure love? What more consummate and more extensive righteousness can there be than that, by which he rescues us from sin, hell, death, and the devil? And do not his truth and wisdom most conspicuously appear in all he has accomplished for us?

This, therefore, is the true and substantial faith, which consists in a living and effectual reliance on God, and not in empty words. In this knowledge of God, or faith, we must, as becomes the children of God, make daily advances towards perfection.† Hence the Apostle pours out most fervent prayers, "that we may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."‡ As if he had said, 'Though it were the sole care of our lives to learn the depth of the love of Christ, yet would there still remain continual and never-failing matter for farther enquiry.' Neither is it to be supposed, that this knowledge consists in a barren and quiescent speculation of the universal love of Christ, extending itself over the whole world: but we must also taste it in our own hearts; we must experience the sweetness and

* Acts, xvii. 28. † 1 Thess. iv. 1. ‡ Eph. iii. 10.

delight, the power and vital influx of this immense kindness displayed in the Word, and embraced by faith. Can we say that he knows the love of Christ, who never tasted its sweetness? Hence it is said of some that were endued with this experimental sense, that they had "tasted of the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." * All this is effected by faith through the Word. The same sensation of the divine love is also intimated by the effusion of "the love of God in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."† In this consist the fruit and efficacy of the Word of God. And this only is the true knowledge of God, proceeding from experience, and founded on a living and practical faith. For this reason the Epistle to the Hebrews calls our faith a *substance*, and a certain and well-grounded *evidence*.‡ And this knowledge of God, that arises from a living faith, is not the least part of the inward and spiritual worship of God. In a word, *faith* is a spiritual, living, and heavenly gift; yea, the very light and power of God.

When, therefore, this true knowledge of God is attained, by which God offers himself, as it were, to be touched and tasted by the soul, according to that Psalm, "O taste and see that the Lord is good;"‖ it is impossible that a sincere repentance should not immediately ensue; that is, a real renovation of the mind, and reformation of the life. For, from a sense and knowledge of the divine Omnipotence, proceeds *humility;* since he must necessarily submit himself unto the mighty hand of God, who has perceived its irre-

* Heb. vi. 4. † Rom. v. 5. ‡ Heb. xi. 1. ‖ Psal. xxxiv. 8

sistible power and energy. From a participation of the divine mercy arises *charity* to our neighbour; for no man can be uncharitable who has ever been affected by a sense of the divine compassion. Who can refuse to lend to his neighbour, that considers that God, from pure mercy, has bestowed himself upon us? From the long-suffering of God, proceeds great *patience* towards our neighbour; so that were it possible that a true christian could be killed seven times a day, and as many times be restored to life again, yet would he always freely forgive his murderer, and this on account of the boundless mercy of God conferred upon himself. From the divine justice flows *knowledge of sin*, as the prophet teaches us: "Righteousness belongeth unto thee, O Lord, but unto us confusion of faces." * "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." † "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" ‡ From an apprehension of the truth of God, flow *fidelity* and candour towards our neighbour; and all fraud, deceit, lying, and other such sinister practices, are in consequence freely abandoned. The sincere christian reasons thus with himself: 'God forbid that I should deal deceitfully with my neighbour; for then I should offend the truth of God, which is God himself; who, having dealt so faithfully with me, it would be the blackest impiety were I to act otherwise by my neighbour.' The consideration of the eternal divine wisdom produces the *fear of God*. For whoever knows God to be the searcher of hearts, viewing the most secret recesses, must

* Dan. ix. 7. † Psal. cxliii. 2. ‡ Dan. cxxx. 3.

necessarily dread the eyes of the divine majesty. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" * Therefore, "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, 'Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?' Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: For shall the work say of him that made it, he made me not? Or shall the thing framed, say of him that framed it, he had no understanding?" †

From the true *knowledge of God*, arise the *knowledge of sin*, and consequent repentance. This repentance brings renovation of mind, and renovation of mind is accompanied with amendment of life. And this knowledge, together with those things that attend it, makes up the other part of the inward worship of God; and it is that sacred fire which, by the appointment of God, is to be used with the sacrifices, lest his wrath should be kindled against us, and we be consumed by the fire of his vengeance.

The injunction of God to the priests, not to drink wine or any intoxicating liquor when they were about to enter the tabernacle, ‡ was a type of this repentance; and in a *spiritual* sense, it extends itself to all Christians. For if we would enter into the tabernacle of God, even into life everlasting, it is necessary that we should abstain from the lusts of the world and of the flesh, and from whatever tends to bring the spirit in bondage to the body. For the love of the world, the love of pleasure, pride, and other vices, are like

* Psal. xciv. 9. † Isa. xxix. 15, 16. ‡ Lev. x. 9.

palatable wine, by which the power of the soul and spirit being clouded, is at last brought under subjection to the flesh. Man, so subjected, is restrained from entering into the tabernacle of God; that is, he cannot arrive at the knowledge and sanctuary of God; consequently, he is deprived of that discerning faculty, which distinguishes between things sacred and profane, clean and unclean: so that he understands nothing of divine and heavenly operations, and therefore is unfit to instruct those in sound doctrine who are committed to his care. His understanding and thoughts are not enlightened from above; but being overcome with the wine of worldly lust, eventually rush headlong into eternal darkness.

This repentance, contrition, and grief for sin, as also true faith in Christ, is naturally attended with *the knowledge* of *grace* and *remission of sin;* which, as it is to be recovered through the merit of Christ only, so the benefit of this merit can be claimed by no man without repentance. Repentance was therefore necessary, even to the thief upon the cross, that his sin being first remitted, he might freely accompany Christ into paradise. And that his repentance proceeded from a heart affected with a holy contrition, appears from the reproof which he gave his companion: "Dost not thou fear God? We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss."* and from the request he addressed to Christ: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."† These are

* Luke, xxiii. 40. † Verse 24.

most undeniable proofs of a contrite heart, embracing Christ and his merits by faith.

This gracious absolution from sin, which is apprehended in faith by a penitent heart, supplies all those defects under which we labour: but it is entirely the effect of the death and blood of Christ. All our offences are as completely annulled by his abundant satifaction, as if they had never been committed. The merit of Christ is of that extent and power, that the prophet exclaims: "Purge me with hysop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be (not only as white, but even) whiter than snow."*

Hence also it is, that God is said to *mention* the sin no more when the sinner returns to his duty.† For whatever is fully and completely paid for, yea, blotted out too, must of necessity be buried in eternal oblivion. But conversion must go before remission, according to the *order* proposed by the Prophet himself: "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil. Come now and let us reason together: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."‡ As if he had said: 'Ye who require your sins to be forgiven, according to my covenant and promise, come forward and call me to an account. I do not indeed deny, that I promised you remission of sins; but it was on no other terms, than that you should first repent. Where is your repentance? where your true and living faith? If you have these, all is well! It shall not be my fault, if your sins, (though as crimson in grain, though so deeply dyed, that neither heaven nor earth can blot

* Psal. li. 7. † Ezek. xviii. 22.—xxxiii. 16. ‡ Isa. i. 16.

them out,) be not wholly pardoned and made whiter than snow.' Repentance, therefore, repentance, I say, is the true confession of sin; and if you have this in yourself mixed with faith, be assured, that Christ, by virtue of his death and blood, will entirely forgive you your sins. This blood, as it is shed for us, so it cries to God in heaven, and procures a full remission of sin.

When a man is thoroughly affected with this sense of sin, he hastens in spirit to those cities of refuge, of which three, Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan, are mentioned by Moses, being appointed by him, in order that he who had inadvertently killed his neighbour, might flee unto them and be preserved. *

And, alas! O Lord, how often have we slain our neighbour with thoughts, words, hatred, envy, anger, revenge, and unmercifulness! Let us, therefore, fly upon the wings of faith and repentance, to the sanctuary of the grace of God, which is the merit and cross of Christ. No sooner do we arrive there, but we are safe: nor will the avenger measure to us again with that measure with which we served our neighbour. For by those three cities Christ Jesus is signified and represented. He is termed Bezer, that is, a *fenced tower*, according to that saying of Solomon: "The name of the Lord (Christ Jesus) is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." † He also is the true Ramoth, which signifies exalted: for Christ is the Most High, ‡ "and at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." ‖

* Deut. iv. 41, 44.
† Prov. xviii. 10.
‡ Isa. lii. 13.—lvii. 15.
‖ Phil. ii. 10.

Nor have we any other Golan besides him; which, as the original word imports, is a *heap of favours*, a store-house of all manner of celestial gifts. Hence we read in the Psalms; "With the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption."* And in the epistle to the Romans: "The Lord is rich unto all that call upon him."†

We have now spoken concerning the *third* part of inward, spiritual, and true worship, arising from the knowledge of God. This knowledge is also the source of repentance, as repentance is of remission of sins, and each rests on an experimental knowledge of God, as on a proper foundation to sustain it.

Thus is the letter of the law of Moses changed into spirit, or into an inward, holy, and new life; and its sacrifices are converted into unfeigned repentance. Hereby we offer up unto God our body and soul, together with the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. Hereby we ascribe unto him alone, our knowledge, conversion, justification, and remission of sin, that God alone may be all in all, his grace worthily acknowledged, and celebrated with thankful hearts and tongues unto all eternity. This, then, as hath been already mentioned, is the true worship of God, of which the prophet says: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"‡ O when, therefore, shall we wretched mortals become truly penitent, that we may obtain this gracious pardon of sin; for without penitence it is impossible we should secure unto

* Psal. cxxx. 7. † Rom. x. 12. ‡ Mic. vi. 8.

ourselves so incomparable a mercy. For how can sin be remitted, when there is no sense of sin, no sorrow affecting the mind, no hunger after divine grace? And how can he grieve for sins, that utterly refuses to abandon them, and to change his life for a better? May God through Christ turn us, that so we may be truly turned!

From these considerations it abundantly appears, that the true worship of God is seated in the mind, and consists in the knowledge of God, and in true repentance, which mortifies the flesh; and, through grace, renews man after the divine image. In this order, man is made the holy temple of the Lord, where, through the good Spirit of God, internal worship is performed, in the exercise of faith, charity, hope, humility, patience, prayer, thanksgiving, and the praise of God.

But though this worship has regard to God himself, and is offered to him alone; yet far be it from us to believe, that God has any need of our adoration or service, or that he receives any advantage from it, or any addition to his perfection. Let us rather think, that such is the mercy of God to miserable men, that he is willing to impart himself wholly to us with all his benefits, to live, to operate, and to dwell in us, provided we be but ready, by true knowledge, by faith and repentance, to entertain him; that as in our heart, as in the school of the Spirit, he may teach us true wisdom, and carry on the work he has so happily begun.

For there is no work approved and accepted of God, but that of which he himself is the author. Therefore has he commanded us to repent and to believe, to pray and to fast; not that the benefit in any way might return to him, but to us alone. For to God no man can give, and from

him no man can take away; him none can profit, and none can hurt. If we be found good and sincere in his sight, we shall reap the advantage of it ourselves; but if we be found false and corrupted, the evil will return upon our own heads. But what harm, O man, canst thou do to God, if thou wilfully persist in impiety and a dissolute course of life?

God, therefore, commands himself to be served on thy account, not on his own. He being Love itself, it pleases him that many be found in his service, to whom he may freely impart the streams of his love, yea, even himself too. For as a mother cannot but love the infant that hangs at her breast, so God takes a singular pleasure in a free and unconfined communication of his love and kindness.

CHAPTER XXII.

A true Christian is known only by love, and by a daily amendment of life.

NOT a christian name, but a christian life, evidences a true Christian: let this therefore be the care of the Christian, that in him Christ may be seen, and visibly appear unto others, in love, humility, and kindness! for he in whom Christ does not live, certainly cannot be a Christian. And this Life, having fixed its roots within, in the spirit and heart of a man, must of necessity spring up from this inward principle—just as the

fruit springs up from the inherent virtue of the tree. For it is necessary that our life should be influenced by the spirit of Christ, and fashioned after his example; according to that saying of the Apostle—"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:"† for all life proceeds from spirit; and as is the spirit which inwardly acts, moves, and governs in a man, so will the man outwardly appear. Whence it is evident, how necessary the Spirit of God is to a truly christian life; and, therefore, Christ has not only commanded us to pray for it, but has also promised to give it.‡ This spirit is a spirit of regeneration,‖ by which we are quickened in Christ, into a new, spiritual, and heavenly life, as the genuine effect of it: and from the life and never-dying power of this spirit, every christian virtue must be derived. It is then that "righteousness flourisheth as the palm-tree, and groweth like a cedar in Lebanon.§

Hence it follows, that a man must be first internally renewed in the spirit of his mind after the image of God; and that his inward desires and affections must first be conformed to Christ, (which the Apostle terms "the new man created after the image of God"¶) before a suitable life can proceed from the heart. But as soon as the heart is inwardly renewed, the outward life proceeding from it, is but a constant expression of that vital principle which prevails within the mind. Yea, since "God trieth the heart and the reins,"** it is reasonable that a man should

* Rom. viii. 14. † Rom. viii. 9. ‡ Luke, xi. 13.
‖ Tit. iii. 5. § Ps. xcii. 12. ¶ Eph. iv. 24.
** Ps. vii. 9.

possess, in the more secret recesses of his heart, even much more than outwardly appears in his life.

Though in our inward part, we attain not unto the purity of angels, it is but just that we should fervently sigh after it. And, indeed, God approves the desires of our spirit when it thirsts after a further purification: "The Holy Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."* Yea, the blood of Christ purifies us by faith, † so that we are "without spot or wrinkle:" ‡ and in this respect, we possess not the purity, holiness, and righteousness of any angel, but that of Christ; yea, and Christ himself. ‖

This undeserved righteousness, freely applied to us, must renew our body, soul, and spirit, and produce a true holiness of life and manners. And this life, though it is at first like a tender palm-tree, must daily become more and more vigorous in us, and gather strength in Christ Jesus. And our growth in Christ will be in proportion as we advance in faith, in virtue, and the practice of a Christian life and holiness. This is to "flourish like a palm-tree."

As the palm-tree, when depressed, mounts the higher, so ought a Christian to renew himself continually in his spiritual desires and exercises. He is to strengthen himself every day with fresh purposes to walk suitably to his new name, and with unwearied endeavours to avoid the danger of being a false Christian. He is to proceed with vigour and earnestness, as if he had but this day been initiated into the principles of true religion. For

* Rom. viii. 26.
† Acts, xv. 9.
‡ Eph. v. 27.
‖ 1 Cor. i. 30.

as one that enters upon a new office, has nothing more at heart than worthily to acquit himself in his post; so also should we act, who are called unto Christ, "with an holy calling."* If this holy purpose be not firmly rooted within, no amendment of life will ensue, no vigour in piety, no increase in Christ; yea, the very quickening Spirit of Christ must be wanting. For such a resolution and holy firmness of doing good is the work of the Spirit of God, and of that preventing grace which allures, invites, and moves all men. Happy is the man, who with his ears and heart proves obedient to it, and hearkens to that heavenly wisdom which "utters her voice in the streets."† In a word, whatever a man views with his eyes, is a memorial of the Creator, by which he calls upon man, and endeavours to draw him to the love of himself.

Whenever, therefore, we feel this heavenly call or impulse upon our minds, we should immediately set our hand to work, and take care that a moment so invaluable do not slip away in a light and careless manner. This is an hour free from such obstacles as at other times closely beset us. If this be slothfully neglected, other days and times may possibly succeed, in which we cannot think, hear, speak, or do any good. This being foreseen by eternal Wisdom, she every where lifts up her voice, and calls upon us, lest we should neglect the opportunity which is so freely offered.

As a tree planted in the open air, readily admits the light of the sun, and the benign influences of heaven; so the grace of God, with other celestial influences, shines upon thee, O

* 2 Tim. i. 9. † Prov. i. 20.

man, and would revive and nourish thee by its presence, if the incumbrances of this world did not hinder thee from receiving the benefit.

Call to mind the shortness of the time appointed for life! Seriously consider, how many opportunities of doing good, and of reducing the Christian virtues into practice, thou hast already neglected. One half of thy life has possibly been consumed in sleeping, and the other in eating and drinking, and in other natural actions; so that when thou now comest to the grave, thou hast but just begun to enter upon a better life.

If thou art afraid to die wickedly, O lead a holy life whilst thou art in good health! If thou desirest to leave the world as a Christian, endeavour to be a good Christian whilst thou art in it. Now he only lives as a Christian, who demeans himself, as if he were every day to die; well knowing that a good servant will at all times be ready at the call of his master. And God, by death, as by his officer, summons us all before his tribunal.

"Blessed," therefore, "is that servant, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: Of a truth, I say unto thee, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath."* And who is it that watches, but he who does not suffer himself to be carried away by the world, or its unhappy admirers? Let us, therefore, flee from both; knowing that the manners of this corrupted age are like baneful excrescences, which drink up the vital sap of a tree, and, in a short time, cause it to wither.

* Luke, xii. 37, 44.

CHAP. XXIII.

In order to advance in the life of Christ, worldly friendship must be avoided.

THOU actest wisely, if thou avoidest the too frequent familiarity of worldly men. For as it is never better for our bodies than when they are at home; so it is ever best with the soul, when it is at rest in its own habitation, which is God himself; from whom it derives life and being. To him, therefore, the soul must return again, if ever she enjoy solid rest or repose.

It is observed of all creatures, that they no where live so well, as where they drew their first life and original. Thus the sea to the fishes, the air to the birds, the earth to the plants, and God to the soul, is the place of rest, according to that Psalm—"The sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young."* As that man will bring trouble upon himself, who gives young people too much liberty to go abroad; so shall he suffer much, who yields up the reins of his tongue and thoughts, allowing them to wander through the affairs of the world, as so many circles of vanity. Be assured, that you will escape many faults, if you study to confine your thoughts within the limits of your heart.

* Psalm, lxxxiv.

"Those that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God."* What are these courts? They are the internal and spiritual sabbaths of the heart; which as Lebanon in the desert, flourish best in a retirement of mind, and abstraction of spirit. Labour to attain this solitude of soul, and thou shalt become fit to search into thyself, and to contemplate that variety of wonders and mercies which God has bestowed upon us.

Nor are we to imitate those who admire subtle disputes and inventions, who take pleasure in reading nothing but fine, pleasant, and witty productions; which, if rightly considered, deprave, rather than improve the mind of the reader. Whatever does not promote the repose of the heart, and the continual renovation of the mind, should neither be heard, spoken, read, nor even entertained in thought, by a disciple of Jesus. True Christians are like the trees of God, which should daily grow stronger, and take deeper root in Christ. St. Paul testifies of himself, that besides "Christ and him crucified," he desired to know nothing."† And this has been the general practice of all the saints of God, who have endeavoured to the utmost of their power, by carefully cherishing this blessed tranquillity of heart, to approach nearer and nearer to a life raised above the world, and to emulate those elevated minds that entirely rest in God, as the centre of all their happiness. One of these characters has expressed herself in this manner: "As often as I converse with men, I return less a man in some part or other." For since the dignity of human nature principally consists in the simili-

* Psalm xcii. 13. † 1 Cor. ii. 2.

tude of God, and therefore God hath described man to be the image and likeness of himself; it follows, that the more unlike any man is to God, the less a man he is: and the more closely he unites himself to God, the more conformed to HIM does he become. None can, however, turn himself to God, who does not first withdraw himself from the world. It is the nature of every seed, to bring forth a plant of its own kind; so if the seed of God, the Holy Spirit and Word, be in thee, thou shalt become a "tree righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified."*

Nothing is more common, than that some word or other is dropped in the conversation of men, which being idle and vain, grievously wounds and pollutes the soul. No man, therefore, has more security and peace, than he who keeps at home, and restrains his thoughts, his words, and his senses, from straying beyond their bounds.

He that will speak well, must first learn to be silent; for to talk much is not eloquence, but prating. He who desires to command well, must first learn to obey; since it is impossible that he should be a good ruler over others, who knows not how to be subject and obedient to God. He that desires peace and serenity of mind, must set a watch over his tongue, and maintain a good conscience; for an evil conscience is like the troubled sea; yet shall it find rest if it return unto Christ by contrition and repentance. The dove which Noah sent out of the ark, not finding any place of rest, returned thither again.† This ark is Christ and the Church, having only one door or window, which is that of repentance, through

* Isa. lxi. 3. † Gen. viii. 9.

which we are to come to Christ. And as the dove retired into the ark immediately when she found no rest for her foot; so when thou art floating in a sea of worldly affairs, and art in danger of suffering shipwreck, retire immediately into thy heart to Christ; lest, being too much tossed on the floods of the world, thy rest be broken, and the tranquillity of thy mind entirely destroyed.

While thou conversest with men, and art engaged in the affairs of this world, be careful to manage every thing with fear and humility. Avoid all inconsiderate rashness in acting. Remember thou art as a tender shoot tied to a pole, in order that it may grow up with the more safety: so do thou constantly lean on the staff of humility, and the fear of God, lest a sudden tempest should arise, and lay thee level with the ground. Alas! how many a man is deceived when he too unadvisedly rushes into worldly affairs, and with more freedom than is convenient, converses with men. Persuade thyself, therefore, that it is as unsafe to trust to the world, as to the sea. The external joy of the world, though for a time it sooth a man in his carnal security, and promise prosperous things, yet will soon be disturbed by an unexpected tempest, leaving nothing behind but the sting of an evil conscience.

If a man would, on the one hand, seek no pleasure in what is frail and perishing; and if on the other, with a mind freed from secular cares and affairs, he would give himself up to those more heavenly concerns that become a true Christian; there is no doubt, but he would often be visited with a fervent devotion, a profound peace, a sweet tranquillity, a serene conscience, and other divine comforts. He must first, however, remove those delights which the world affords, if he would

have them succeeded by those that are divine and heavenly. But, alas! we will not be persuaded of these things; and hence it follows, that our conversion, amendment, and devotion are, by our too free conversation with men, rather hindered than improved. We may find within us, what we easily lose in an inconsiderate pursuit of things without us. And as a tree no where prospers better than in its natural soil; so the inward man grows nowhere more happily, than in the inward ground of the soul, where Christ resides.

The mind or conscience of man, is possessed either with joy or sorrow. If the conscience be conversant with things internal and heavenly, it will refresh us with inward delight and comfort; but if it be polluted with an excessive cleaving to worldly concerns, it will be of necessity attended with inward sorrow and perplexity.

As often as the soul is effected with hearty remorse for sin, she bewails herself, and sends up secret groans to the throne of mercy. This penitential exercise is a wholesome fountain of tears, in which the soul, night after night, cleanses and washes herself by the spirit and by faith, through the name of *Jesus;* that so she may be duly prepared to enter into the inward sanctuary, and holy of holies, and there enjoy a secret intercourse with the Lord.

And because the Lord is "a God that hideth himself," * the soul must approach him in a way remote from the noise of the world, that she may the more freely partake of his divine communications. Hence David says: "I will hear what God the Lord will speak." † And "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all

* Isa. xlv. 15. † Psalm, lxxxv. 8.

my fears. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." * "Unto thee will I pray: My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." † Thus the farther the soul retires from the world, the more intimately she converses with God; just as the patriarch Jacob conversed most familiarly with God and angels when he was farthest removed from friends and children. It cannot, indeed, be expressed in words, how much a soul sequestered from the friendship and fellowship of the world, is loved by God and by angels.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the Love of God and our Neighbour.

"Now the end of the commandment is Charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." ‡ In this verse, the Apostle sets before us love, the highest and noblest virtue; and acquaints us, at the same time, with four particulars concerning it.

First, that Love is the summary of all the commandments: for "love," says the Apostle, "is the fulfilling of the law;" ‖ in which all the pre-

* Psalm, xxxiv. 4, 6.
† Psalm, v. 2, 3.
‡ 1 Tim. i. 5.
‖ Rom. xiii. 10.

cepts are comprehended, and without which, all gifts and virtues are unprofitable and fruitless.

What he says in the *second* place, that Charity must arise from a pure heart, relates to the love of *God*, which requires a heart void of worldly love and affection, according to that saying of St. John: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." * Whosoever, therefore, has a heart purified from all love to the creature, so as to depend or acquiesce in no transient good whatsoever, but on the contrary, cleave most intimately to God alone, saying with David, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." † The charity of such a one, proceeds out of a "*pure heart*." Of the same character also, is that love which is attended with great delight, pleasure and joy in God; of which we have an instance in David: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." ‡

The Apostle, in the *third* place, teaches us, that love must be "out of a good conscience." This properly concerns the love of our *neighbour*, who is to be loved, not for the sake of interest or worldly advantage; (which would be a

* John, ii. 15, 16, 17. † Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26. ‡ Psal. xviii. 1, 2.

false love out of a *bad conscience*;) but for the sake of God only, and of his commandments. Nor ought we to afflict our neighbour either by word or deed, either secretly or openly; nor on any account, bear envy, wrath, hatred, malice, or rancour, against him; that so our consciences may not accuse us when we address ourselves in prayer to God Almighty.

The *fourth* requisite of Charity is, a "faith unfeigned;" so that nothing be done contrary to the rule of faith, and to our Christian profession, and God be not denied publicly or privately, in prosperity or adversity. This is the substance of what is contained in that short sentence of the Apostle; and we shall now speak more particularly, with respect to each of the several parts

In the *first* place, then, *Love*, according to the Apostle, "is the end of the commandment;" for Charity which arises from a pure faith, is the noblest among the fruits and effects of faith; than which a man can do nothing better or more acceptable to God. For God does not require at our hands great and difficult enterprises, no high performances that exceed our capacities; but he has changed the yoke of the Old Testament service, and its many commandments and ordinances into faith and love, and has given us for this end the Holy Ghost, who, "shedding abroad in our hearts the love of God," * renders every thing sweet and easy, and proves the original spring of this heavenly virtue.

Love, therefore, is not a hard work, a labour attended with toil and difficulty; on the contrary, it makes every thing as easy to a good man, as if he had no burden at all. "His commandments

* Rom. v. 5.

are not grievous,"* that is to say, they are not so to an enlightened Christian: for wherever the Spirit of God comes, he creates a free, willing, and ready heart in the discharge of Christian virtues. Nor does God require of his children great skill or learning: it is only love which he regards. If this be sincere and fervent, free from disguiseand dissimulation, God is more pleased and delightcd with it, than in all the knowledge and wisdom, in all the art and talent that any man upon earth, in his best works, can possibly express. And wherever this divine love is wanting, there all wisdom and knowledge, all works and gifts, are altogether unprofitable. They are accounted vain and dead, as a mere carcase without life.

As for human learning and great abilities, they are common to Heathens as well as to Christians; and great actions are performed as well by infidels as by believers. It is *love* only which proves the sure test of a sound Christian, distinguishing between the false and the true. For wherevcr Charity is wanting, there can be no good thing, however it may strike the admiration of men with specious sppearances. The reason is, because God is not there; for "God is love, and he that dwellcth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." †

Love is also pleasant, not only to God who gives it, but also to man, who excrcises it: whereas, all arts and sciences, all the knowledge and wisdom which man grasps, are not attained but with grcat labour and study, with much care and application, and even at the expence of bodily health. But, this heaven-born love cheers both

* 1 John, v. 3. † 1 John, iv. 16.

the body and the mind. It invigorates the spirits, confers new strength, and wonderfully improves and exalts the mind. Nor is it attended with any loss whatever, but on the contrary, produces many good and noble effects in the soul. Love is itself the reward of the lover, and virtue always carries its own recompence with it: as, on the contrary, the vicious man is punished by his own excesses, and vice is the constant tormentor of him that commits it.

Again, when the other faculties of the body and mind are faint and wearied, love faints not. Love is never weary, never ceases. Prophecy may pass away, tongues may cease, and sciences may be destroyed; arts may be lost, the knowledge of mysteries may vanish, yea, faith itself at last may fail also: but yet "love never faileth," nor can fail: for when all that is imperfect is happily removed, then love alone abides for ever, and attains its full perfection.

To render any thing pleasing to Almighty God, it is necessary that it proceed from him; since he approves of nothing but what he himself works in us. God is love; it therefore follows, that all we do, ought to proceed from a divine faith, in order that it may be pleasing to God; and from pure love, that it may prove profitable to men. This love, I say, must be *pure*, without any regard to self-honour, self-interest, and those mean designs which sometimes intrude into a Christian's actions. In like manner our prayer should spring from a principle of love, that it may have the more ready admittance to the God of love. Consider, therefore, how that man's prayer can be acceptable to God, who is full of wrath and rancour, hatred and malice? Were such a one to repeat the whole Psalter every day, it would be but an

abomination before the Lord. True prayer consists in spirit, in faith, in love, not in a long recital of words. Remember the example of Christ, who, from a merciful heart, cried, "Father, forgive them." * A man that does not love God, is also unwilling to pour out his heart in prayer and supplication: but to him who is affected with a sense of divine love, the duty of prayer is easy and joyful. A man that has a cordial love to God, readily serves him; but he that is void of this love, does not serve him at all, though he may submit to much toil and drudgery, and even heap one mountain upon another. Upon the whole, nothing is more agreeable to human nature, nothing better and more profitable, than this divine love, which therefore should be stirred up in the heart of man, and when once raised into a flame, should be carefully preserved from being ever quenched.

Faith should work all things in a Christian through love; and love should be the agent of faith, as the body is the agent of the soul. The soul sees and hears, tastes and smells, speaks and acts, through the body, to which she is united; so O man! should the love of God, springing from faith, do all things in and through thee. Whether thou eat or drink, hear or speak, commend or reprove, let all be done *in love*, after the example of Christ, in whom resided nothing but pure love. If thou beholdest thy neighbour, behold him with the eyes of a compassionate lover; if thou hearest him, hear him with love and tenderness; and if thou speakest with him, let thy speech be seasoned with love and Christian affection.

* Luke xxxiii. 34.

Carefully preserve the root of Christian love by faith, in order that nothing but what is good, may grow up in thy heart, and issue thence, as from its genuine centre. Thou shalt then be enabled to fulfil in time the commandments of God; since they are all comprehended in love. Hence, a holy man has expressed himself after this manner: "O love of God in the Holy Ghost! thou art the ravishing sweetness of souls, and the divine life of men. Whosoever enjoys not thee, is dead even while he lives; and whosoever possesses thee, never dies in the sight of God. Where thou art not, there the life of men is a continual death; and where thou art, there life is made a foretaste of eternal happiness." Whence it appears, that this divine love is the sum and fulfilling of all the commandments of God.

We consider now, in the *second* place, that our love to God ought to proceed "out of a pure heart." The heart of a man who is desirous to love God, ought first to be cleansed from all worldly love and adherence to the creature. It is then that God becomes the chief and sovereign good to the soul. She can then say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. * The Lord knoweth the days of the upright," that is those that love him out of a disinterested heart; "and their inheritance shall be for ever. † Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." ‡ In a word, God alone is the only fountain whence all our joy ought constantly to spring.

God, therefore, should be the beloved object of our souls, and our hearts should rest in him alone,

* Psalm, xvi. 5. † Psalm, xxxvii. 18, 23. ‡ Verse 4.

because he is the sublimest good. He is wholly composed of mercy and goodness, of love and kindness, of clemency and patience, of truth, comfort, peace, joy, life, and happiness. All this he has laid up in Jesus Christ. Whoever, therefore, has Christ, is thereby put into the possession of all these heavenly virtues. And whoever loves God, must also of necessity love God's truth and mercy, his goodness and kindness, and the whole train of divine virtues.

Hence a true lover of God has a love to all that God loves, and an aversion to all that God hates. If any man love God, he must love truth, mercy, and righteousness, because God is all this himself. He must also delight in humility and meekness, since thereby he is rendered conformable to that meekness and lowly-mindedness which resided in *Jesus*. On the contrary, a true lover of God cannot but abhor all ungodliness, with all the works of iniquity; because all manner of impiety is enmity against God, and is the work of the devil himself. A lover of God hates a lie, because the devil is the father of lies, and was a liar from the beginning. And this is the reason that every one who loves lies, injustice, and other vicious workings of nature, must needs, in that sense, be the offspring of the devil, And again, whoever loves Christ his Lord and Saviour, loves also the example of his pure and holy life, his humility and meekness, his patience, and the other heavenly virtues that appeared in his conduct. And such a one must of necessity be adopted into the number of the children of God.

This love, proceeding out of a "pure heart," must be obtained from God by prayer and supplication. And truly, God is willing to enkindle in us this heavenly flame through the love of

Christ, if he be but earnestly solicited, and if the heart be every day and every moment laid open to his divine influence. If thy love should grow cold and weak at any time, arouse thy heart, faint not, but stir up the grace of God within thee, and be not too much discouraged at it. In the name of God arise again, set to work, and renew the acts of thy first love. As thou art sensible of thy coldness in love, thou mayest be assured from that circumstance, that the eternal light of divine love is not *wholly* extinguished, though it be eclipsed, and at present give but little heat. Doubt not but that thy Saviour will enlighten thee again, and fire thy heart with his love; so that thou mayest sit once more under his shadow, and rejoice in the light of his countenance. At the same time, be earnest in prayer and supplications, lest hereafter the flame of this heavenly love should be again deadened in thy heart.

Let us now consider, in the *third* place, Charity, as arising from a "good conscience," and as it respects our neighbour. The love of God and of our neighbour are so closely united, that they can never be separated. The true touchstone of our love to God, is the love we bear to our neighbour. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his neighbour also." * For the love of God cannot dwell in a man who is filled with hatred or malice, or divested of all bowels of love and compassion. If thou hast no pity on thy

* 1 John, iv. 20, 21.

brother, who stands in need of thy help, how canst thou love God, who needs not any thing that is thine, and has commanded thee to express thy love towards him, by bestowing marks of it upon thy brother?

As faith unites to God, so love unites to our neighbour: and as a man is made up of body and soul, so faith and love (that is, the love both of God and of our neighbour,) make up a true Christian. Thus he that "dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." * And since God effectually minds the good of all men, it follows, that he who loves in like manner, is of one heart with God; and that he who is otherwise affected, is against God, and has not the mind of the Lord grafted on him, but is the enemy of God as well as of his neighbour. He is, unquestionably, an adversary to God, who is an enemy to men.

It is the property of this love to bewail and compassionate the infirmities of others. Indeed the failings and weaknesses of our fellow creatures represent to us, as in a glass, our own imperfections, and remind us of the various defects that encumber our nature. Therefore, when thou seest another overtaken in a fault, consider that thou also thyself art but a man; and learn from thy own infirmities, to bear those of others with patience, meekness, and humility.

Such especially as sin, not from malice or determined wickedness, but who are surprised into a fault by weakness and inadvertency; and who, coming soon to themselves again, are sorry for what they have done, and firmly resolve to watch the more against the snares of Satan for the future; such souls as these are surely to be pitied

* 1 John, iv. 16.

and assisted. He that does otherwise, shews that he has nothing in him of the merciful and forbearing spirit of Christ. When a man is for hastily punishing the faults of his neighbour, without feeling any love or compassion, it is an evident sign that he is altogether void of God, and of his merciful spirit. On the contrary, a true Christian, being anointed with the spirit of Christ, treats all men as one that has a fellow-feeling with them, and bears with them in a sympathizing Christian love and tenderness, according to the example of Christ, which he has left us to follow. Therefore, if any man, upon serious search into his inward condition, finds that he has not the love of his neighbour abiding in him, let him know, assuredly, that the love of God remains not in his soul, and that he himself is without God. This should strike him with horror and indignation against himself; it should influence him the more speedily (after repenting of his sin from the ground of his heart,) to reconcile himself to his neighbour, that, in this order, the love of God may also return to him again. Then all his actions, while he continues in this love and faith, are good, holy, and divine: and this love dwelling in his heart, will actuate him freely and willingly to embrace all men, and with great affection and joy to do them all manner of kindnesses; so that he will "rejoice over them to do them good," even as God himself. *

Without this love, whatever is in man, is diabolical and exceedingly evil. Nor is there, indeed, any other cause why the devil can do good, but becasue he is utterly destitute of love both to-

* Jer. xxxii. 41.

wards God and man. Hence all which he does, is radically evil, and deprived of all intrinsic goodness. In all that he sets about, he designs nothing but God's dishonour, and man's destruction. He cunningly contrives ways to vent his enmity both upon God and man: and, therefore, he seeks for such hearts as he can replenish with spite and envy, and then discharge through them his malice and wrath. "And hereby it is manifest who are the children of God and the children of the devil." *

Lastly, Love must be "out of faith unfeigned:" loving God equally in prosperity and adversity. Whoever loves God sincerely, accepts with joy all the dispensations of his providence, after the example of Christ; who, with a cheerful and ready mind took up the cross, which he knew the will of his Father imposed on him. "I have," says he, "a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened (and in pain) till it be accomplished!" † In the same manner have all the holy martyrs carried with joy their cross after Him.

To those that unfeignedly love God, the cross, which Christ enjoins us to bear, does not prove grievous or burdensome; and this for no other reason, than because it is the *yoke of Christ*. If the magnet attracts the heavy iron, why should not that heavenly loadstone, the love of God, attract the burden of our cross, and render it sweet and agreeable; especially after the heart is affected with a touch of the divine love? If the sugar sweeten such herbs as are bitter by nature, why should not the sweetness of the love of God make that pleasant and easy, which to the flesh is no-

* 1 John, iii. 10. † Luke, xii. 50.

thing but a cross and affliction? And truly it was from the fulness of this love, that the blessed martyrs bore the most exquisite pain with patience and joy; being transported with it to such a degree, as to be almost insensible of their very torments.

CHAPTER XXV.

The love of our Neighbour more particularly considered.

"OF whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage;" * and there is no bondage more hard and grievous, than to be under the yoke of the passions: but of all these, none is so cruel as *hatred*, which so weakens and depresses all the powers both of body and mind, as not to leave the man one free thought. On the contrary, he who lives in *love* is *free*. He is no slave to anger, envy, covetousness, pride, lying, or calumny; and being delivered from these by love, he suffers not himself to be subdued by evil desires, but continues Christ's freeman in the liberty of the Spirit: "For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." † Whosoever, therefore, walks in the love of Christ, is no longer a slave to sin, or a servant to carnal affections; for the Spirit of that love has freed and purified him from carnal concupiscence. And we see that the love of God extends itself over all men; of which we not only find sufficient proofs in Scripture,

* 2 Pet. ii. 19. † 2 Cor. iii. 17.

but the footsteps of his *universal* benignity are also every where displayed in nature.

We are all equally covered with the heavens, and have all the use of the sun, the air, the earth, and the water; as well they who are of high degree, as they who are of the meanest condition. And the very same mind that is in God towards us, ought also to be in us towards men; God himself having set us a pattern of *catholic* kindness for our imitation. He regards not one more than another, but loves all with an equal affection. With him there is no respect of persons, of dignity, or merit; but he beholds all alike in Christ. This is for our instruction. For as God acts towards us, so ought we to act towards our neighbour. And truly, after the same manner as we deal with man, so God will infallibly deal with us again; having written this law in our hearts for our stronger conviction, and as an encouragement to animate us to acts of mutual love and benignity. We need not go far to enquire what favour we have with God Almighty. If we but enter into our own conscience, it will impartially tell us, what mind and affection we bear to our neighbour; and as we have done to him, so certainly will God do to us again, and return our works into our own bosom. And in this sense it is said of God, that "with the pure he shews himself pure; and with the froward, shews himself froward;" * that is, if thou bearest an evil mind to thy neighbour, God will be thine adversary also.

Since, therefore, God has no need of our service, he has substituted our neighbour in his place, to receive our charity, and has commanded us to pay it as to himself. He has made this love of our

* Psalm. xviii. 26.

neighbour, the very *touchstone* by which we are to examine the sincerity of our love to God.

And it is for this reason he has enjoined the love of our neighbour with so great earnestness, requiring us to shew constantly the same love to him which God shews to us. For unless a man be fully reconciled to, and in perfect charity with his neighbour, he cannot have the favour or grace of God. And although all the sins of the world are atoned for by the death of Christ, and a full pardon obtained, yet all mankind may in some sense be said to be in the same circumstances with the wicked servant in the parable, who, when he had not wherewithal to pay, the king freely remitted him all his debts: but when he afterwards behaved himself cruelly towards his fellow-servant, the king revoked his pardon, and condemned the servant, on account of the hard usage with which he treated his neighbour. * Which parable Christ concludes with this remarkable expression: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also to you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother, their trespasses:" † And, "With the same measure ye mete unto others, it shall be measured to you again." ‡

Hence, it plainly appears, that man was not created for himself alone, but for his neighbour also. So strong is the commandment of loving our neighbour, that when it is broken, the very end of our creation is destroyed, and the love of God is immediately withdrawn from the soul. Nothing is left but the severest justice, judging and condemning all that are void of this charity. If we duly considered these things, we should never be angry with one another; neither would

* Matt. xviii. 23, &c. † Verse 35. ‡ Luke, vi. 38.

the sun ever go down upon our wrath." It is true, on the one hand, that Christ by his death on the cross has offered a full and complete atonement for all our trespasses, and in this respect, (after the example of the king in the parable,)* has remitted all our sins at once; yet is it on the other hand, an awful consideration, that the whole extent of the merits of Christ will be of no avail at all to us, if we continue to hate our brother, and will neither pardon nor love him. We shall be entirely cut off from all the benefit that flows from the atonement.

Hence, it appears, how important the love of our neighbour must be in the sight of God, binding us even to such a degree, that God will disdain to be loved by us, unless we love our neighbour also; so that if we fail in our benevolence toward him, we fall at the same time from grace and divine charity. And for this reason, we were created all equal and of the same nature, that we might not insolently despise one another; but, like children of one common parent, live in peace and love, and endeavour to maintain a good and serene conscience.

Moreover, whoever hates and despises his brother, hates and despises God also, who has forbidden all such animosities in the severest terms. If thou contemnest thy brother, God also contemns thee; which, as it certainly hastens thy judgment and condemnation, so it plainly shews, that as yet thou hast no interest in the merit and redemption of Christ, but art still in an unpardoned, reprobate state. For it cannot be possible that a heart filled with wrath and bitterness, should in any degree reap a saving effect from the blood of Christ, which was shed from a motive

* Matt. viii. 23.

of pure love. Yea, the above parable plainly convinces us, that God was less offended at the debt of ten thousand talents, than at the barbarous cruelty of which the servant was guilty. Let us, therefore, ponder the words with which the Lord concludes the parable; "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also to you."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Why our Neighbour is to be loved.

"WHEREWITH shall I come before the Lord? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?—He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." *

By this question, and the answer to it, the Prophet teaches us, wherein the true worship of God properly consists; not in ceremonies and sacrifices, which are not able to give any thing to God, because all is his own already; not in offering up human bodies, which he does not require at our hands, but detests and abhors, because they are injurious to Jesus Christ, the great propitiatory oblation which God appointed to take away the

* Micah, vi. 6, 7, 8.

sins of the world: * but the true worship of God consists in pure faith, which, from the visible effect of it, the Prophet here describes, by "doing justly," that is, by the exertion of faith in righteousness, in charity, and mercy, (which is more pleasing than all sacrifices;) and in true humility, and contrition, as it is said: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." †

To this divine worship, founded within the heart, and exerting itself in faith, love, and humility, St. Paul powerfully exhorts us. His admonition contains in it both the praise of Christian love, and the perpetual bond in which we stand engaged to our neighbour, and without which it is impossible to serve God aright. For truly there is no other way of serving God, except by that which he himself works in our hearts: so that to serve God, is nothing else but to serve our neighbour, and to do him all the offices of Christian love and humanity which we are able to perform.

The Apostle calls love a summary of all virtues, and the "fulfilling of the law." ‡ Not that we are able by any acts of charity, to fulfil the rigour of the divine law, or that consequently we can merit eternal life thereby; (which cannot possibly be, except our love were complete in every respect, and arrived to a consummate perfection:) but the Apostle gives it that name, to suggest thereby the wonderful excellency of this virtue, and to engage us, at the same time, to an unfeigned love of it. As to our righteousness and happiness, they are not grounded on any

* John, i. 29. † Psalm, li. 17. ‡ Rom. xiii. 10.

work of ours, but only on the merits of Christ applied to us by faith.

From this righteousness of Christ, apprehended by faith, springs love to our neighbour, together with the whole train of Christian virtues, called by the Apostle "fruits of righteousness, which are to the glory and praise of God." * But since the dignity of this virtue is so very eminent, it will be proper to lay down further motives by which the practice of it may be endeared to us.

The first and strongest of all, in my opinion, is that which St. John uses: "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him:" † For who would not wish to be in God, and to remain in Him; and that God reciprocally should be and remain in him? And who, on the contrary, would not abhor to be in Satan, and to have Satan dwelling in him? and yet this is the ordinary consequence, as often as charity is repulsed, and unnatural animosities are admitted into the heart. For as God is a lover of men, ready to save them from eternal destruction, so the devil is a hater of men; and he that dwelleth in hatred, dwelleth also in the devil, and the devil in him. This is further explained by St. John: "He that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." ‡ And again: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." ‖ And can there be any thing more desirable than to be ranked among the sons of God, to be begotten of God, and to know God truly and experimentally? But whoever has his heart void of this

* Phil. i. 11.
† 1John, iv. 16.
‡ 1 John, iv. 7.
‖ 1 John, iii. 10.

love, and has never felt its force and energy, nor tasted its goodness and gentleness, long suffering and patience, this man knows not God, who is pure love. For the knowledge of God must proceed from enjoyment and experience. And how is it possible that a man should know Christ, whilst he is a stranger to love, and to all those affectionate endearments that pass betwixt Christ and the soul? Hence it follows, that he that is without love, is without Christ also. But he who is earnest in the practice of piety in general, and in the exercise of love in particular, shall not be left barren in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ: "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." *

The second motive is found in what our Lord himself saith: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." † Now, in order to be a disciple of Christ, it is not enough to be a Christian in name only, or in a dry verbal profession: but to be a disciple of Christ implies much more. Such a one must believe in his name; must love him, imitate him, live in him. He must, in a peculiar manner, adhere to him; must feel the love of Christ infused into his soul, and freely partake of all the gifts and benefits purchased by him. Whoever has not this love of Christ abiding in him, is not Christ's disciple, nor can he pretend to have any share in his merits. For how is it possible that Christ should know a man who has neither faith in, nor any love at all to him? As a

* 2 Pet. i. 8. † John, xiii. 35.

flower is known by its fragrance, so a true disciple of Christ is known by love alone.

Hence, St. Paul the Apostle does not hesitate to affirm, that "all gifts without charity are nothing;"* which is a third motive why we should desire this excellent gift. And in truth, neither the knowledge of divers tongues, nor the gift of miracles, nor the understanding of high and sublime mysteries, nor any extraordinary endowments, are sufficient marks by which to know a Christian; this prerogative being entirely reserved to "faith, which worketh by love."

Nor does God, indeed, require any hard things at our hand, (such as the working of miracles,) but to exercise love and humility; virtues that may be apprehended by the meanest capacity. Nor will it be demanded of thee in the day of judgment, whether thou hast been versed in arts, tongues, and sciences, or what great parts thou hast possessed in this world; but, whether thou hast pursued faith working through love. "I was an hungered," saith our Saviour, "and ye gave me meat, &c."† And St. Paul says to the Galatians: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; (no gifts, no parts, no endowments, no respect of persons,) but faith which worketh by love."‡

Add to these, as a fourth motive, that passage of St. John: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also."‖ This all the inspired writers unanimously teach, that love towards

* 1 Cor. xiii. † Matt. xxv. ‡ Gal. v. 6. ‖ 1 John, iv. 20, 21.

God cannot possibly consist without love to our neighbour. For he that hates his neighbour, must be an enemy to God; because God is a lover of men, and requires us to be of the same mind.

A fifth motive is, that love is the first and the great law of nature, and attended with many things beneficial to mankind, and without which they would not be able to live. When any good thing happens to man, it certainly proceeds from divine love. Hence, St. Paul calls love, the "bond of perfectness;"* and enumerates, in other places, the excellent fruits that grow upon this stock. And our Saviour himself teaches to the same effect: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."† And this is so universal a truth, that the Heathens themselves, who had the oracles of God committed to them, were, by the very law of nature written in their hearts, convinced of it. Hence they used to say, "That which you would not should be done to yourself, do not the same to another." Which excellent sentence, the Emperor Severus, a prince adorned with many virtues besides, had daily in his mouth, and enacted it into a law for the good of the country.

A sixth motive is, that love is a beautiful image and lovely foretaste of eternal life; when the saints shall love each other sincerely; when they shall delight in one another, and converse together with wonderful and ineffable concord, in an inexpressible sweetness, in unfeigned affection, cheerfulness, and joy. Whoever, therefore, would conceive to himself an image of that marvellous

* 1 Cor. xii. and xiii.—Rom. xii. 9.—xiii. 8, 9, 10.
† Matt. vii. 12.

love and harmony, and obtain some foretaste of the exquisite pleasures of the eternal beatitude, let him study this love, in which he will find a singular pleasure, with much peace and tranquillity of mind.

The more pure and fervent our charity is, the nearer it approaches to the divine nature. This is a seventh motive. In God, in Christ, and in the Holy Ghost, there resides, doubtless, the most pure, fervent, fruitful, and transcendent love of all. It is then that our love becomes pure, when we love one another, not for the sake of private interest, but for the sake of the love of God, which is the great and unerring pattern we ought carefully to follow. For God loves us with a disinterested love: and if any man loves his neighbour for his own private profit and interest, his love is not pure at all, nor does it, in any degree, come up to that sublime original which is set us by God Almighty. This makes also the difference betwixt heathen and christian charity. A Christian loves his neighbour in God and in Christ, disinterestedly and generously, without debasing himself by any ignoble or selfish design. Thus is his love preserved pure and sincere, free from dissimulation, falsehood, and counterfeit. Whereas the Heathen polluted their deeds with self-honour and interest, and other sinister ends which mingled with the best of their actions. This christian love, when it becomes a habit in the mind, produces a true ferveney of spirit, to perform still greater acts of love and benignity. And it is then that love is truly fervent, when it inspires the lover with great merey and tenderness towards his fellow-creatures, and with vigorous efforts to relieve their necessity. When he has the affairs of his neighbour as much at

heart as his own, so that he is ready even to "lay down his very life for the brethren,"* if need be, or, after the example of Moses and Paul, to be "accursed" for the brethren, and to be "blotted out of the book of God," if this possibly could be done.†

Hence it follows, which is the eighth motive, that we ought also to love our enemies, according to the Lord's precept: "Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your father which is in heaven: for if you love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not the publicans the same?"‡ Herein consists the excellency and prerogative of a true Christian; namely, to subject nature to this divine principle, to tame flesh and blood, and to overcome the world, and the *evil* therein, with *goodness*. ‖ "If thine enemy hunger, feed him."§ It is not enough for a Christian not to hurt his neighbour or enemy; but he is commanded to *do him good*, and to support him with such aids, as are convenient for him. Whoever refuses to comply with these terms, cannot be a child of God, or a disciple of Christ.

The ninth motive is, that whoever does not practise Christian love and charity, separates himself from the spiritual body of Christ, (which is the Church;) and forfeits all the privileges of this body, and even the merits of Christ; there being but "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."¶ For as the members, when cut off from the body, no longer partake of the life and

* 1 John, iii. 16.
† Exod. xxxii. 32. Rom. ix. 3.
‡ Matt. v. 44. Luke, vi. 35.
‖ Rom. xii. 21.
§ Rom. xii. 20.
¶ Eph. iv. 5.

influence of the body, but die away in a little while; so those that do not live in the practice of love and charity, separate from Christ, the Head of the Church, and can receive no power and vital influence out of his fulness. Thus, St. John says, "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death."*

Lastly, we ought to love one another, because on the wings of this love the prayer of a Christian sweetly ascends to heaven. By prayer, all good gifts are to be obtained; and without prayer, all helps and consolations are expected in vain. But then our prayer must spring from the evangelical principle of love; since God gives ear to no prayers, but to those that are grounded on faith and Christian charity: "If two of you agree on earth, as touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."†

Come then, O man! and let this sweet agreement and harmony be established among us upon earth. Let us live in the SPIRIT of love, that peace and union may be revived among us; for where peace is, there is the God of peace;‡ and where he is, there "he hath also commanded his blessing and life for evermore."‖

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* 1 John, iii. 14. † Matt. xviii. 19.
‡ 2 Cor. xiii. 11. ‖ Psalm, cxxxiii. 3.

CHAP. XXVII.

Why Enemies are to be loved.

THE first cause why enemies ought to be loved, is the express commandment of God by his Son; for which he gives this reason, "that we may be the sons of our Father in heaven," that is, "of him that loved us when we were yet his enemies."* As if he had said, 'Unless you love your enemies, you cannot be the children of the heavenly Father: and he that is not God's son, what father shall he have?' This commandment of the Lord is little practised; and this is a manifest sign, how backward we are in bringing forth such fruits as become the children of God. If we be his children, truly we ought to study the great lesson of loving our enemies, that so, in some degree, we may express the character of our Father in heaven.

The Scripture says, "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death."† And why does he abide in death? Because he has not yet received that vital principle which is to be derived from Christ. The spiritual and heavenly life consists in faith towards God, and in love to our neighbour. Thus, St. John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."‡ Whence it is manifest, that love is an undoubted sign and effect of spiritual life

* Rom. v. 10. † 1 John, iii. 14. ‡ 1 John, iii. 14.

and restoration; as hatred to men is an infallible proof of spiritual death and separation from God. And this spiritual death here, will end in eternal death hereafter; of which our Lord faithfully warns us.

Whoever, therefore, suffers his heart to be filled with wrath and bitterness against his neighbour, must know, assuredly, that even his best performances, his prayer and attendance on divine worship, and other works of that nature, are altogether vain, and of no account before God. St. Paul says, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."*

Moreover, it is the property of a noble and god-like mind, to pardon injuries. Behold how long-suffering God is, and how easily he is reconciled. Consider the example of Christ, the Son of God, who, in the midst of his exquisite torments, like a patient lamb, did not so much as "open his mouth."† Contemplate the nature of the divine Spirit, who seems to have appeared in the form of a dove,‡ with a view that by such a representation he might teach us a dove-like meekness of mind, and recommend to us that sweet simplicity of manners, which becomes a true Christian. With what patience did Moses bear the reproaches of the people, thus deserving to be called "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."‖ Remember also the conduct of David, and with what lenity of mind he heard the curses of Shimei.§ Nay, the Heathen moralists themselves have left some

* 1 Cor. xiii. 3. † Isa. liii. 7. ‡ Matt. iii. 16.
‖ Numb. xii. 3. § 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

sententious sayings, on this subject, which are not altogether to be disregarded by Christians.

True love teaches us to be angry with none but ourselves. True peace consists not in having much wealth, but in bearing patiently whatever goes against our nature. It was a saying of Seneca,* "If thou hast any greatness of mind in thee, thou wilt never believe that thou hast been reproachfully used." Should a mad man rail at the sun, and curse it for being nothing but darkness, the sun would never be darkened by his reproachful language, but continue his course, and enlighten the world as before. So do thou also, and remember that there is no sweeter or better revenge than to forgive. Such wise and excellent rules were practised by many of the Heathens themselves. Pericles, the Grecian orator, having patiently heard a man revile him for the space of a whole day, when night came on, kindly invited him to his house, and entertained him in a friendly manner, saying, "It is easier to speak evil of virtue, than to possess it."† Thus Phocion, general of the Athenians, when he had deserved well of his country, but through envy was adjudged to death, and was now about to undergo the sentence, being asked if he had any commands for his son, generously made answer, "None, except that he never take measures to revenge this injury, which I suffer of my country." The Emperor Titus being told, that two brethren had conspired his death, scrupled not to invite them both to sup with him; and on the morning went with them to the Theatre, and

* Si magnanimus fueris, nunquam judicabis tibi contumeliam fieri.

† Facilius est virtuti maledicere, quam illam possidere.

placed himself betwixt them, to behold the play. Thus with marvellous clemency, he overcame at last their horrid baseness.

But after all, he who cannot be influenced by the unspeakable patience and meekness of the Son of God himself, to forgive and to love his enemies, him neither the example of the saints, nor of heathens, will ever be able to melt into love and forbearance. What greater injustice and barbarity can be conceived, than that the Son of God should be so shamefully treated by the children of men, as to be made a laughing-stock to Jews and Gentiles, to be scourged with stripes, crowned with thorns, spit upon, and loaded with all the marks of scorn and derision; and lastly, to be nailed on the cross, and to bear, with an unshaken firmness, all the affronts and indignities, which the malice of men was able to contrive; nay, and freely to pardon all this barbarous usage, and to pray, "Father, forgive them!"

And, truly, it was to this very end that our blessed Redeemer set his example before our eyes, that it might be an all-healing medicine for such spiritual diseases as have seized upon us; particularly, that it might abase all pride and loftiness, strengthen what is weak, supply what is defective, and correct what is evil and out of order. Can the distemper of pride be so violent, as not to be healed by the profound humility and lowliness of Christ? Can avarice and covetousness prove so stubborn, as to baffle a cure derived from that sacred poverty which appeared in Jesus Christ? What wrath is so fierce and vehement, that his meekness and lenity cannot mollify? What desire of revenge so bitter and barbarous, which his patience cannot assuage and compose? What inhumanity so great and cruel, which the love of

Christ cannot warm into a sweet and compassionate temper? And lastly, what heart can be so hard and obdurate, as not to be melted with the tears of Jesus Christ himself?

Who would not heartily wish to be made like God the Father, his Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to carry within him the excellent image of the sacred Trinity, which chiefly consists in love and forgiveness? For it is the highest of all the divine properties, to shew compassion and mercy, to spare and to pardon, to be kind and gracious: and that must be undoubtedly one of the sublimest virtues, which makes us bear the nearest resemblance to the most high God, and to all such persons as are the most conspicuous for goodness and virtue.

Lastly, the highest degree of valour and virtue is, when a man, overcoming himself, is ready at any time to forget injuries, to pardon offences, and to shew acts of favour and clemency. Whoever thus gains the conquest over himself, (said a wise heathen,) is stronger than he that overcometh walls and fortresses: no valour can exceed it.* "He that is slow to anger," says Solomon," is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."†

This is one of the highest steps of the soul's ascension in her spiritual exercise; and when she has attained it, she rests in God, and is perfect in him.

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* Fortior est qui se, quam qui fortissima vincit
Mœnia; nec virtus altius ire potest.

† Prov. xvi. 32.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Love of the Creator should be preferred to that of all creatures: and our Neighbour is to be loved in God.

THE heart of man is so constituted, that it cannot exist without love; the love of God, or the love of the world and of self. If, therefore, man be under so strong a compulsion to love, let him direct his love to God, the supreme Good of all, and give up that affection to him, who originally planted it in man, and kindled it by his good Spirit; and who is still ready, at our fervent request, to rekindle this flame in the soul. His love to us is still the great principle that produces our love to him: and if his love to us meet with a suitable return on our side, then, his love will, day by day, more ardently embrace us. For love begets love, according to that Scripture of St. John: "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father."*

Wherever the love of God resides, it disposes the soul freely to love all men, and not only to wish them well, but to do them all proper acts of love and beneficence; this being the property of that love which is grounded in God, and derived from him. Such a lover of God and of his neighbour, will never hurt or defraud any man in word or in deed.

* John, xiv. 21.

But alas! the generality of people are engrossed so much with the love of the world, that they never even admit the love of God into their hearts. This is plain from that false love with which they treat their neighbour, and which, under a shew of friendship, seeks nothing but temporal advantage. Nothing in the world should be loved to such a degree, as to injure the love of God, or to come in competition with it; especially since there is so great a vanity and vileness in the world, and so great a worth and majesty in God, as that no comparison can ever be made betwixt them. As God infinitely excels all his creatures, so the love of God infinitely excels in holiness and dignity all the love we can bear to the creature, and is in no wise to be compared with it. No love to the creature ought to have sufficient weight with us, to make us offend the love of God, or to act contrary to the same.

St. Paul says: "Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" * These words may not improperly be applied to this case. Who is more worthy of our love, than he that hath planted it in our hearts, and to whose love we owe our life and being? And as we all live by the love of God in Christ, so we should all adhere to this love, and make it our constant support even in the time of adversity. As a pilot in tempestuous weather, does not leave the ship to the mercy of the billows, but secures it by the anchor as well as he can, and stays its unruly motions; so in like manner, when the ship of our faith is tossed about in the sea of this world, and beset on all sides with the temptations of sin and vanity, of wrath and pride, of lust and avarice, we should

* 1 Cor. ix. 7.

endeavour to repose ourselves on the love of Christ, and not suffer our hearts to be removed from that spiritual stedfastness, which is to carry us safe through all the tempests of this perverse and boisterous world. Thus, when sin and death, the devil and hell, tribulation and persecution, and other miseries, threaten to overwhelm us, we are then to hold fast the love of God manifested in Christ Jesus. This divine love is like that hill of salvation which was shewed to Lot when he went out of Sodom, to escape the fire of that accursed place. *

The fire of lust, attended with everlasting flames and torments, is worse than that of Sodom. But the love and fear of God are a sovereign remedy against this profane love, and against any motion contrary to its pure and heavenly nature. It was this divine fear and love which preserved Joseph from the enticements of Potiphar's wife, and it still guards us against the snares of an infectious world. †

No man can love the world, but he who has never tasted the love of God; nor can any man hate, defraud, or circumvent his neighbour in any thing, but he that does not love God from his heart. Whence arise all the anxious cares of this life, that grief and vexation of spirit with which poor mortals are disturbed? Surely, from nothing but a *want of the love of God.* For the sweetness of divine love is so strong and effectual, that it mitigates the sense of all the miseries that are incident to this life. This love renders a man comfortable even in death itself.

Again, such is the nature of love, that it influences a man to lay aside all thoughts about any

* Gen. xix. 17. † Gen. xxxix. 9.

thing else, and to fix entirely on the beloved object, in order to possess and enjoy that alone. Why then are the children of men so much besotted with the things of this world? Why do they not eternally forget all wealth and honour, lust and riches, that they may enjoy Him alone, whom they profess to love? This was in former times the constant practice of the holy men of God; whom the exquisite sweetness of this divine love had so much overpowered, as to make them forget the whole world, and even themselves also. Hence they were accounted fools in the world, when at the same time they were the wisest of all men; and it was their despisers who most deserved the character of fools and madmen, as preferring a handful of frail and transient things to everlasting and never-fading prosperity. Those are the greatest fools, who call the godly by that name, who, setting their love on things above, are deeply concerned to obtain and eternally enjoy them.*

A true lover of God, loves God as if there were nothing in the whole universe to love but God alone. And for this reason, he finds all that in God, which he sought before in the world. For God hath in himself all things *essentially*, whatever we can desire. He is true honour and joy; he is peace and pleasure; he is wealth and magnificence. With him are light and life, glory and majesty, and all those delights that the heart of man can desire. All is found in a more substantial and transcendent manner in God, than it is in the world. If, therefore, thou lovest any creature, for the sake of *beauty*, transfer thy love to God, who is the fountain of all beauty. If thou wouldest

* 1 Cor. iii. 19.—iv. 10.

love that which is *good*, fix thy love upon God, who undoubtedly is the eternal source of all goodness, nay, the essential good itself, and without whom there is no goodness at all. For whatever goodness the creature may seem to possess, it is but an inconsiderable drop derived out of the ocean of the infinite goodness of God, and which is besides impaired by many frailties and imperfections that adhere to it.

To conclude, is it not far better to set thy love and affections on God alone, the unexhausted fountain and well-spring of all perfection and goodness? The less a thing has of earthly gravity in it, the lighter it is, and the more easily is it carried upwards. So it is with the soul, the more it cleaves to earthly things, and is pressed down by them to the ground, the less ability has it to raise itself to God, and rejoice in its Maker. In a word, the less a man loves this world, the more will the love of God and of his neighbour prevail in the soul. For he that loveth God, cannot but love his neighbour also, and he that dares to offend God, will not forbear to offend his neighbour.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Of Reconciliation to our Neighbour.

EVERY one who desires to be reconciled to God, must of necessity endeavour to reconcile himself to his neighbour; because God takes the injury which is offered to man, as offered to him-

self; and the damage done to man, as done to himself. When, therefore, any one offends both God and man, he cannot be restored to the favour of God, before he is reconciled to man his neighbour; for having offended them both, he must also be reconciled to both, which is expressly attested by Christ himself: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." *

It will be needful, therefore, to say something further of the love of God and of our neighbour, and how impossible it is to separate the one from the other: and again, that this reconciliation so joined together, proves the true source of brotherly love and affection; which the beloved disciple hath expressed as follows: "If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he that loveth God, love his brother also:" † So utterly impossible is it, that the love of God should subsist without the love of our neighbour. Hence also it follows further, that he who truly and unfeignedly loves God, will also embrace his neighbour with the same sincere affection. And again, if the love we profess to bear to God, be hypocritical and false; then the love with which we seem to love our neighbour, will rise no higher than its principle, but prove false likewise. Therefore, the love of our neighbour is the test of our love of God, by the right application of which, the truth

* Matt. v. 23. † 1 John, iv. 20, 21.

or falsehood of that love will easily be discovered.

This consideration gives us a true insight into the love of our neighbour, and that brotherly reconciliation which ought to attend it. There is a twofold object given by God to man, to which all the actions of his life are constantly to tend; namely, the love of God, and of our neighbour. Into this, all our endeavours ought finally to be resolved, and we ought to make a daily progress in this holy exercise; since we are to this very end, created, redeemed, and sanctified. In a word, Christ himself is the one and only scope in which all our actions ought to centre. Now the more we approach to love, the more we approach to Christ, and to the practice of his unblameable life.

For this very end God was made man, or the Word was made flesh, that he might set before our eyes a most lovely, and living image of his infinite love and kindness, and that from hence it might appear, that God was Love itself; love in his own immense, incomprehensible, and unsearchable essence; and that man, by viewing so amiable an object of love, as is displayed in Christ Jesus, might be transformed into the same image day by day.

Furthermore, as in Christ, God and man are united together by an indissoluble tie, so the love of God is so closely connected with the love of our neighbour, that it cannot exist without it. Nay, the love of God and of our neighbour can be no more disjoined or put asunder, than the divine and human nature in Christ. And as he who injures the humanity of Christ cannot but affront his divinity also; so he who offends man, is in like manner guilty of offending the infinite God himself.

We will illustrate what has been said, by a comparison derived from nature. When a circle is made, and from its centre a number of lines are drawn to the circumference, all these lines, though ever so distant in the circumference, meet together in the point, which is in the middle. Here they are all united in one, and all flow into one, be they ever so wide asunder, yea, even directly opposite one to the other. Not one of all the lines, let their number be ever so great, can be broken from the rest, without losing its communication with the centre itself, wherein they all meet. So God is a point, or a centre, whose circumference is every where, and which, in a manner, extends itself to all men upon earth. Whoever presumes to break off the lines of his love from his neighbour, must in like manner disjoin and break them off from God at the same time. And as all these lines cohere and concur in the centre, and therein mutually affect one another, so is there a sort of central sympathy, and a fellow feeling, as it were, of the sufferings of our neighbour, provided we be but all united in God, the great centre of all good Christians.

The truth of what has been said, is forcibly illustrated in the history of Job. When the news was brought him, that his temporal goods were destroyed, it appears that he quietly bore the loss of them without giving any great sign of discontent at the appointments of Providence. He still continued to bless the Lord, and freely to own, that he who had given him his property, had also a right to take it away whenever he pleased. But when he was told, that he had also lost his children, then indeed it went to his heart: then he "arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and wor-

shipped." * So let every true Christian act when he hears of the calamity of his neighbour; (here represented by the children of Job) knowing that he ought more to be affected with the misery of his neighbour, than with the loss of all his worldly substance. For it is the property of true love, to be moved with the miseries of other men more than with our own losses. O happy men! if they would live together in mutual love and affection! Then frauds would cease, then injuries would be known no more, nor would there be any complaint of unjust ways, or of underhand dealings.

In order that this might be more deeply impressed on the heart, God was pleased to create but *one* man in the beginning, together with Eve, who was soon after brought forth. This was done, that all mankind springing up from one original stock, and, as it were, from one root, might all unite in mutual kindness, and brotherly affection with one another. This, I say, is the reason why God did not create a multitude of men in the beginning, but one only; whereas he created *many* beasts, trees, and herbs at once.

The love which God commands us to pursue, is of that agreeable nature, and of that incomparable sweetness, that it does not in the least burden either a man's soul or body. Nay, it renders the mind easy under every event, is most agreeable to our very nature, and in every respect attended with a quiet and blessed life. But if the same God who has enjoined thee to love thy neighbour, had commanded thee to *hate* him, thou wouldest then have had cause to complain of hard usage, and of a far heavier burden than that which

* Job, i. 20.

love can possibly impose upon thee. For the spirit of hatred and revenge is a tormenter of the soul, and a daily grief and vexation to those that are enslaved by it. On the contrary, love refreshes the whole man; and is so far from weakening or destroying body or soul, (which is the common effect of hatred and envy,) that it is a great preserver of both, and exhilarates them by the healing influence which it carries with it. In a word, to those that love God, it is a pleasure to love their neighbour also; but those who do not love God, will think it a hard and difficult task to embrace their neighbour with brotherly love. But if thy depraved nature still find it a hard task to love thy neighbour, then consider how hard it will be to be banished for ever from the presence of God, and to endure the pangs of hell to all eternity. Wretched is the man, who makes so sad a choice as to prefer hell-torments to a friendly reconciliation. Our own experience would soon convince us, if we made the trial, that as by faith we enjoy solid peace with God, (as the Apostle assures us;)* so by Christian love and reconciliation, we enjoy peace with men, together with much ease and tranquillity of heart: whereas, on the contrary, a mind full of rancour and malice frets itself, and has no other reward to expect, than the lashes of an unruly conscience.

The sum of all is this: Every virtue rewards its followers with peace of conscience, and serenity of mind: and every vice punishes those that commit it with the recompence they deserve. Every virtue exalts those that practise it; and every vice covers its slaves with shame and ignominy. With regard to the order and method by which we are

* Rom. v. 1.

to proceed in working out a sound reconciliation with our offended neighbour, the Scripture is explicit. The terms of reconciliation are these:— 1. The offender is to ask pardon of the person whom he has offended. 2. He is faithfully to restore that of which he has defrauded his neighbour; that is, he ought to return not only the *principal*, but also the *fifth* part over and above it. * 3. If there be none to receive it, he is then to offer it unto the Lord himself.

This restitution of things unlawfully taken away, is commanded in such strong and expressive words, as to make it absolutely necessary for furthering an unfeigned repentance. St. Augustine has thus expressed his mind on this subject: † "The sin is not remitted, unless the thing unlawfully taken away be restored." "When the thing that is taken away may be restored, and is not, there is no true, but a feigned repentance. ‡

And truly it is the property of unfeigned repentance to contemn all earthly things, and count them as dung in respect of that abounding grace which is bestowed upon a penitent sinner. Of this we have a glorious instance in Zacchæus, and in his conversion to God; † who has had however but very few followers in this degenerate age. Sound conversion to God cleanses the heart, and purifies the conscience, by faith in Christ; it breaks the power of sin, and by influencing a man to restore such things as are wrongfully detained, not only clears the heart before God, but also the outward conduct in the eye of the world. For in

* Numbers, v. 7.

† Non dimittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum.—Cum res aliena, quæ reddi potest, non redditur; non agitur, sed fingitur pœnitentia.

‡ Luke, xix. 8.

the heart and conscience a man is a thief before God, as long as he keeps any thing back that is taken away, however he may cease to steal hereafter. Therefore, in order that repentance may prove true, and the conscience be freed from guilt, all possible restitution is to be made: or if a man be not able to make full restitution, he ought fervently to implore the Lord, that he himself, in his stead, would restore the things taken from his neighbour, or that which may be better.

Since a sinner is thus bound in a twofold respect to God and to his neighbour, in order that his repentance may be full and efficacious, it is required that both be satisfied. God does not accept any man's repentance, unless he be first reconciled to his neighbour. Therefore, it is to no purpose if thou shouldest say unto God: 'Merciful God, I confess I have offended and injured my neighbour; I have damaged him by wicked gain and fraud; and have dealt so with him, as I would not that another should deal with me: which iniquity I humbly intreat thee, O Lord, to pardon for thy dear Son's sake.' Be not deceived; God will not be mocked! He repels thy prayer, and saith: 'Restore first that which with fraud and usury thou hast taken from thy neighbour, and then thy pardon shall be ready.' Not as if a man merited the pardon of God by this restitution; this is a *debt* due to his neighbour, and how can he pretend to merit any thing by that restitution which he is so engaged to make, and which the law of God expressly enjoins? For thus hath the Lord commanded; "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."*

* Matt. vii. 12.

"For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."*

The same truth is confirmed by the following Scriptures: "Leave thy gift (oblation, or sacrifice) before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled (as the law hath prescribed) to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."† "Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."‡ And again, by the same evangelical Prophet the Lord thus reasons: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward."‖ All these Scriptures, with one consent, proclaim this great truth,—that God will not accept the repentance of any man, or hear his prayer, or regard his alms and oblations, unless he be first reconciled to his neighbour, and make him all the restitution that is in his power.

* Luke, vi. 38.
† Matt. v. 24.
‡ Isaiah, i. 16, 17, 18.
‖ Isaiah lviii. 6, 7, 8.

CHAP. XXX.

Of the Fruits of Love.

"CHARITY suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." * The whole substance of the Christian religion consists in *faith* and *love*. As by *faith* in Christ, the life of a Christian is rendered acceptable to God, (the life which he lives being not so much his own, as the life of Christ in him); so LOVE proves the fruitful principle of all such charitable acts as relate to his neighbour. And so true is it, that all virtues, how shining soever they may be, are of no account without charity; that even faith itself is counted dead if it be without love. † For although faith, as it respects justification, has no regard to works, either preceding, accompanying, or following it, but to JESUS CHRIST only, on whom it lays hold; yet is that faith but mere shew and pretence which is not attended with love, though it should even work miracles. For as a body destitute of a soul is dead; so the inward spiritual man, if he have not works of charity, is dead in all his members. Therefore hath

* 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7. † James, 11, 17.

the Apostle declared, that charity should be an index of faith, and that faith should work by love. * Upon the whole, faith justifies a sinner without works: † yet when it performs the functions of mutual love among men, it will necessarily be accompanied with a train of good works; this being the true test by which genuine faith can be distinguished from all counterfeits. This is that faith which works by love; this is the tree which bears abundance of fruits, as from the following considerations will farther appear.

The *first* of these fruits is patience and long-suffering. "Charity suffereth long." The nature and constitution of this virtue no man ever more fully expressed than Christ himself, the true tree of life, whose goodly and salutary fruits we ought to eat, and to convert into our own substance and nature. As he by his wonderful long-suffering bore the malice of the world, that thereby sinners might be brought to repentance; ‡ so do thou also, O man, order thy life and manners, that it may appear evident, that the meek and gentle Christ lives in thee, and that thou mayest continue in him, as a member firmly united to its head.

The *second* fruit is benignity and kindness: "Charity is kind." This virtue was also most eminently seen in Christ Jesus, and in that example which he hath set us. David says of him: "Grace is poured into thy lips." ‖ And the Evangelist tells us, that "they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." § To these words do thou give attention, O man, and follow this great pattern of love

* Gal. v. 6. † Rom. iv. 6.
‡ Rom. ii. iv. ‖ Psalm, xlv. 2. § Luke, iv. 22.

and benignity, that so Christ may also speak by thy mouth, and that thou mayest remain united to him in perpetual charity.

The *third* fruit is, not to be envious and revengeful, but to be ready to remit any offence whatsoever. "Charity envieth not." Nothing is more agreeable to the nature of God, than to forgive: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."* "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live."† "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."‡ And lastly, this divine goodness is most clearly expressed by Isaiah, and represented as the very character of God: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins."‖ Therefore be thou in this respect also like unto the merciful God. Forgive, I say, and forget the trespasses of thy neighbour, that so, in like manner, Christ may also forgive thine offences and transgressions. It is then that the same mind is in thee

* Psalm, ciii. 8, 9, 10.
† Ezek. xviii. 21, 22.
‡ Jer. xxxi. 20.
‖ Isaiah, xliii. 25.

which is also in Christ. And in this order alone thou shalt obtain fellowship with him.

The *fourth* fruit is candour and sincerity. "Charity vaunteth not itself." A kind and charitable man does not misjudge his neighbour, vaunt it over him—rashly censure him, or disingenuously deride him before others. True love is altogether averse to these rash and unfair proceedings. Whoever sincerely loves his neighbour, shews his heart in his countenance, and does all things ingenuously, and without guile. A most visible example hereof Christ himself hath left us, whose carriage was *equal* both to friends and enemies, and who from the bottom of his heart endeavoured most earnestly to promote the salvation of mankind. Let this be an example to thee, O man, and follow these thy master's footsteps, that so the candour which was in Christ, may also shine forth in thy life and conduct. As the Lord has most heartily espoused our good and interest, so ought we, in like manner, to do the same among ourselves also; if we wish to partake of the nature of Christ, and to be united to him, as living members to their Head and Saviour.

The *fifth* fruit is, not to be "puffed up." Charity is not of a haughty and supercilious temper. It is not swelled with high conceit on account of its own deeds and performances. Behold again thy Lord Jesus! When a woman, in a great concourse of people, lifted up her voice, and said: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." "Yea," replied he, "rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it;" * humbly removing from himself that praise which was entirely due

* Luke, xi. 27, 28.

to him, and resigning it to those that truly loved the Lord. If thou also resolvest to do this, then verily the humble Jesus lives in thee, and thou in him; it being the constant character of true charity, to transfer the praises of men to another whom it esteems more worthy of them.

The *sixth* effect of charity is, "not to behave itself unseemly." A man endued with love, is not easily soured with discontent, or with any morose humour. His conversation is easy, obliging, and so concordant with all the offices of love and humanity, that the kindness residing within, may even be read in his countenance. Of this sweetness of temper, the Lord Jesus hath left us a most bright and unblameable pattern. He did all with a spirit of mildness; and when he conversed with sinners, then pity and compassion visibly appeared in his very mien and aspect. This sweet temper of Christ ought also to be transfused into our souls, that so our life may prove a *transcript* of this most blessed *original*.

The *seventh* fruit of true love is, "not to seek her own." A true Christian has by love recovered such enlargement and liberty of soul, as to serve his fellow creatures freely, without any view to self-interest. Nothing is more pleasing to him than to do good to all without the least expectation of gain. This pure and disinterested love is originally lodged in God Almighty. He gives all things freely, without receiving any profit at all. He commands us to fear and worship him, for no other reason than to make us proper objects of his divine love and benignity. And, lo! what a glorious pattern of disinterested love Christ has set before us! As a tree, without respect of persons, imparts its fruits to all in the most ample and universal manner; so has Christ,

and God in Christ, given himself unto us as the greatest and most excellent good. Go now, O man! and practise the same virtue; that so Christ, the ever-living *vine*, may bud in thee, and that thou mayest become a fruitful plantation of the Lord. *

The *eighth* fruit of true love is, "not to be easily provoked." A man that has tasted of true love, is not apt to entertain any bitterness, much less to vent it by cursing and railing words. Contemplate again the life of Jesus, who did not so much as open his mouth against his enemies, nor pour forth any bitter and vehement speeches, but gave blessing and life to those that hated him. † And though he, indeed, denounced wrath and curses against Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida, and uttered many dreadful woes against the Pharisees; ‡ yet this did not proceed from a bitter or revengeful temper; but was no more than a serious and earnest exhortation to true and unfeigned repentance, that so the offenders might at last be saved. Therefore, let us be cautious, lest any root of bitterness should at any time spring up in us, and so hinder our charity, and thus many be offended. ‖

The *ninth* fruit of charity is, "to think no evil." This is also the property of God Almighty, as he himself testifies: "For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." § Whence it follows, that whosoever has thoughts of peace towards his neighbour, has the mind of

* Isaiah, lxi. 3. † Isaiah, xlii. 2 ‡ Luke, x. 13.—xi. 42.
‖ Heb. xii. 15. § Jer. xxix. 11, 13, 14.

Christ, and is animated and influenced by his spirit.

The *tenth* fruit is, "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity," nor has it pleasure in the injury or oppression of good souls, as Shimei had when David fled before Absalom. * On the contrary, true love imitates Christ Jesus, who, with a tender compassion, beholding the fall of Peter, † raised and reclaimed him, and thereby fulfilled the words of the Psalmist: "God raises them that are bowed down." ‡ And how did he deplore the evil hanging over the men of Judea, and the destruction of their temple and city? ‖ With what fervency, with what a hearty desire, did he bring his wandering sheep into the right way; and with what a sweet and gentle voice did he allure them home! Let us imitate so great a master of love; and if any one be overtaken in a fault, let us bewail his case, instruct him in the spirit of meekness, and bear his burden, that so we may fulfil the law of Christ. § For he did first bear himself the burden of our sins, that we, being made his living members, might be formed to the same temper by him, who is the Head of the Church.

The *eleventh* property of charity is, that it "rejoiceth in the truth," and is exceedingly pleased with a Christian management of things. Of this we have an example in Christ Jesus, who, at the return of the seventy disciples, rejoiced in spirit, and praised his Father for the success which had attended their function. Thus also the angels in heaven rejoice (as Christ himself teaches us,) at the conversion of a sinner. ¶ Whosoever, there-

* 2 Sam. xvi. 5. † Luke, xxii. 61. ‡ Psalm, cxlvi. 8.
‖ Luke, xix. 41.—xv. 4. § Gal. vi. 2. ¶ Luke, xv. 10.

fore, seriously lays to heart the practice of so Christian a virtue, manifests thereby an angelical temper of mind: nay, it is a proof that the very mind of Christ, yea, of God himself, resides in that soul.

The *twelfth* fruit of charity is, to "suffer all things," to preserve the bond of peace and of mutual friendship. Love patiently bears the infirmities of others, after the example of St. Paul, who was made weak with the weak, that he might profit the weak: nay, he was made all things, if by any means he might be an instrument to save some.* The same heavenly love *believeth* all things, and suspects no evil of its neighbour; *hopeth* all things, praying and desiring that peace and happiness may constantly accompany our fellow-creatures. And, lastly, a true lover *endureth all things*, that he may render himself the more profitable to his neighbour. All which our blessed Redeemer, by his own example, has most feelingly taught us. He bore all manner of reproaches and injuries for our sins; he underwent most inhuman scourgings and buffettings, with extreme hunger and poverty, that in him, and by him, we might obtain everlasting joy, honour, and dignity.

The *thirteenth* fruit of love is, "not to be weary," nor to faint in doing good. Herein it is like God, whose mercy is from eternity to eternity upon those that fear him.† God expects and waits that he may be gracious unto us. In order that he might have mercy on us, he rose up to spare us, and he loves to be exalted in shewing mercy. His love is stronger than death, which many waters are not able to quench, and from

* 1 Cor. ix. 22. † Psalm, ciii. 17.

which nothing can ever separate us. * He hath mercy on us with everlasting mercies. And though he declares, on a certain occasion, that he is "weary with repenting;" † yet is this confined to those only who wilfully reject the tender of his mercy, who despise his grace, and abuse his goodness: and in no wise affects those that heartily fear him. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." ‡ After this standard of divine mercy, we ought also to regulate the love we bear to our neighbour, so that it may never fail or faint in acts of humanity and kindness; no not even in those which we are bound to bestow on our very enemies. As Christ did, so ought we, from the bowels of a compassionate and never-failing love, to pray, "Father forgive them." ‖

In a word, Love is the greatest, the best, and the noblest of all virtues: First, because God himself is love. Secondly, because it is the end of the commandment, and the summary or comprehension of the whole law. Thirdly, because it is eternal and never-failing, § so that it is not like faith and hope, which vanish away when that happiness appears which is the end of faith. Fourthly, because all good works and services done to our neighbour without it, are vain and of no account before God. And lastly, because love gives us an assurance here, that by faith in Christ we shall inherit life eternal hereafter. Hence it undoubtedly follows, that Christian love must excel all other gifts and graces whatsoever, and

* Cant. viii. 7. † Jer. xv. 6. ‡ Isaiah, liv. 10.
‖ Luke, xxiii. 34. § 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

that consequently, our main concern ought to centre in so divine a virtue. Nothing, certainly, can be greater than experimentally to know that love of Christ which "passeth all knowledge," that we may be filled with the fulness of God, and the fruits of love. *

CHAPTER XXXI.

Pride and self-love corrupt the best and sublimest Gifts.

LEST any should wonder why St. Paul sets forth the virtue of charity with so many high and eminent praises; 'We are to consider,' says a pious divine, 'that God is LOVE; and that, consequently, the same praise belongs to both: nor can there be a greater virtue in God or man, than love.'

But our love is twofold: the one true, living, sincere, and undefiled; the other false, polluted, hypocritical, and selfish. The former of these St. Paul has most amply described, and exhibited a distinct catalogue of all the fruits and properties that attend it, of which we have already spoken. The latter kind, which is false and polluted, may seem, indeed, to promote the glory of God, and the profit of mankind; yet inwardly, and in the heart, it seeks nothing either in word or deed, but private honour and interest only. Now what-

* Eph. iii. 19.

ever flows from this fountain of false love, proceeds not from God, but from the devil; for it is a poison infecting the very best of works, and the most excellent gifts conferred on man.

As a flower, that in sight, taste, and smell, is most sweet and beautiful, is rejected with hatred if it contain secret venom, because it is hurtful to man; so though a man be adorned with the most exquisite parts, and the very gifts of angels themselves, if he be void of charity, and full of avarice, pride, self-love, and self-honour, then all those gifts not only prove of no effect before God, but become pernicious to him that possesses them. For whatever is really good, always proceeds from God himself, so as to *begin* and *end* in him. Whatever deviates from this *beginning* and *end*, can never be really good, nor acceptable to the Lord. That which this good God works in thy heart, is truly good, and only good: but it is quite otherwise if self-love, self-honour, and self-interest, bear the sway in thy soul, and influence the actions of thy life. All that springs from so depraved a principle, must be of the same nature with the principle whence it flows, corrupt and defiled, since it does not proceed from God as from its original cause and moving principle.

It is said, that it was the wish of a certain saint of old, that he might be of no other use to God, than his own right hand was to himself; an *instrument*, ready to give and to receive what was fit, and this in the manner directed by the soul; arrogating neither honour nor profit to itself. And, indeed, it is right we all should be of the same temper. For as all things come freely from God to us, so we should return all things freely to our neighbour, from a principle of pure love, and in true singleness of heart, without any desire of

glory or self-interest. For as God alone is the author of what is good; so it is but just that all honour and glory should be given to him alone. Man is but an instrument, made fit to receive and to deliver what God bestows upon him. Now if a man be without this sincere and pure love, he is, notwithstanding all his gifts and endowments, a mere nothing, and of no account in the sight of God. "Though he speak with the tongues of angels; though he prophesy, and know all mysteries, and have such faith as even to remove mountains; and though he should moreover bestow all that he has among the poor, and give his body to be burned;" all this will avail him nothing at last, and stand him in no stead when he is to have his trial. *

The reason is plain. Self-love, self-honour, and self-interest, are of the devil, who thereby procured his own downfall from heaven. For after God had created Lucifer a most glorious angel, and adorned him with the most excellent gifts of wisdom, light, and glory, he began to pride himself in his gifts, and to love, honour, and exalt himself. This self-complacency proved the very first step to his ruin. He turned his love from God to himself, and was deservedly driven from his principality, together with all such as adhered to him, and whom he had infected with the same pride and self-love. Not contented with his estate or principality, he aspired too high, and lost all which the Creator had conferred upon him, according to that of St. Jude: "The angels kept not their first estate." †

By the same sin which had effected his own ruin, Lucifer attempted the ruin of man, namely,

* 1 Cor. xiii. † Jude, 6.

by diverting him from the love of God to the love of himself. Hereby self-love and self-honour began to act in man, and influenced him to affect equality with God himself. Hence he was cast out of Paradise, as Lucifer had been before cast out of heaven, leaving to us all the heritage of pride and self-love. And this is the fall of Adam, (described chap ii.) which all men in themselves repeat; and which is transmitted from one generation to another.

The *medicine* by which a thorough cure may be wrought in fallen man, is wholly to be sought in the precious *merit of Christ* apprehended by faith. By this we are renewed in Christ, and the flesh is crucified, with its sinful desires. Then we love ourselves no more, but on the contrary, hate and displease ourselves. We do not honour or extol, but deny and mortify ourselves. We no more seek our own glory and interest; but denying all we have, we withdraw our pleasure and trust from every thing whatsoever it be, and manfully fight with flesh and blood, our spiritual enemies. Whosoever refuses to comply with these terms, can in no case be a disciple of Christ; since this is the only means by which the natural degeneracy of our heart is to be subdued, and a sound conversion is to be effected.

Since it was utterly impossible that man, by his own natural strength, should restore himself, (for of himself, he can do nothing but love himself, boast of himself, and seek his own ends and interest; or to sum up all in a word, *sin*;) God in his infinite mercy, was moved to commiserate man's fallen condition, and to become from beginning to end his renovation. In order to this, the Son of God took the form of a man upon him, thereby to renew our nature, that,

being regenerated by him, in him, and from him, we might become new creatures. For as in Adam we are dead both bodily and spiritually, so we ought to rise again in Christ, and be renewed both in spirit and body. And as by a *carnal* birth we entered upon the sin of Adam, as upon a certain inheritance; so in Christ, by a *spiritual* birth, we must be justified, and enter by faith upon his righteousness, as upon our own inheritance. And as we radically draw our sin from Adam, especially self-love, pride, and ambition; so from Christ, by faith, and by the Holy Ghost, our nature is to be renewed, cleansed, and sanctified. All self-love, pride, and ambition, are to die in us, in order that we may attain a new heart and spirit from Christ, in exchange for the old one which we receive from Adam. And with reference to this new birth in us, Christ is called *Father*, and the *everlasting Father*. *

Hence it follows, that all the works of a Christian, together with his gifts and talents, ought to proceed purely from the new creature, if ever they be acceptable to God; that they ought to spring from faith, from Christ, and from the Holy Ghost. Wherever this principle is wanting, there the most excellent parts, and even miracles themselves, are of no account at all before God. So with respect to our neighbour, all things ought to be done in Christian charity, † without any view to private gain, or honour; as a pattern of which God has set his Son before us, ‡ in whom there was no spot of self-love or arrogance; no desire of profit or praise; nay, in whom nothing resided but pure and undefiled love and humility. He is *inwardly* to live in our hearts by faith, and

* Isaiah, ix. 6. † 1 Cor. xvi. 14. ‡ John, xiii. 15.

outwardly to be expressed in our whole life and conduct. It is then, that all our works, words, and knowledge, wholly proceed from Christ, as from their original source. Without this divine principle settled within the mind, all our gifts and works, be they ever so high and angelical, are insignificant trifles, and of no worth. Wherever self-love sways the soul, there must be a hatred of God; where pride rules, it engenders a contempt of God; and it is utterly impossible that works springing from so vitiated a principle, should be ever acceptable to the Lord.

Let us, therefore, most fervently beseech the Lord, to give us true faith and sincere love; a love defiled with no desire of vain honour, profit and glory. Whenever this divine temper is obtained and established in the heart, it is followed with this happy effect, that thereby not only great and illustrious endowments and works are made acceptable to God, but also the least and meanest of all, even the gift of a cup of cold water. * For a small work proceeding from sincere love and humility, is far more excellent than all the splendid works that are raised on no other foundation than pride and self-love.

* Matt. x. 42.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Great gifts do not demonstrate a man to be a Christian, but Faith only that works by Love.

ST. Paul intending to describe a Christian in a few words, says: "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." * As if he had said, to be a Christian, and to render ourselves acceptable in the sight of God, requires nothing hard and lofty; no worldly wisdom, no human learning, no great parts, no gift of prophecying, no eloquence, no knowledge of tongues, no miracles: but only that a man have faith in Christ; that he do all things in love, and with a mind wholly resigned to God; and that he suffer himself to be led and governed by the good Spirit of God.

We should not, therefore, regard how many languages a man speaks, or how eloquent he is in his delivery; but how he shews forth his faith by love, and by the mortification of the flesh. "For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts:" † under which are included self-esteem, self-love, covetousness, vain-boasting, ambition, self-interest, and other vain desires, which spring from the corrupt principle of the flesh. To which purpose also St Paul says, that "the kingdom of God is not in word," or in

* 1 Tim. i. 5. † Gal. v. 24.

great gifts and endowments, "but in power;"* that is, in a living exercise of Christian virtues, of faith, love, meekness, patience, and humility. Therefore, no man is in favour with God, or accounted happy by him, because he is endued with brighter gifts than others; but because he is found in Christ Jesus by faith, and lives in him as a new creature. Great gifts do not make us happy. If a man had attained to gifts so extraordinary and marvellous as never any possessed before, yet would he be certainly cast away, unless he lived at the same time in the exercise of daily repentance, in a constant renovation in Christ, in a ready abnegation of the world, and in a generous denial of himself, and of all his selfish desires. Nay, if he did not hate and forsake himself, so as to place his whole confidence in God alone, and to cleave to his grace, as an infant to the breast of the mother, he would be in danger of being for ever banished from the presence of God, notwithstanding all his gifts and all his endowments.

It is certain, that gifts and parts are not bestowed upon us in order to make us great here, and happy hereafter; but they are wholly dispensed for the edification of the Church. When the seventy disciples, at their return, said with joy, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name;" † our Lord replied: "In this rejoice not; (for neither miracles nor gifts shall save you,) but rejoice rather because your names are written in heaven."

By faith Moses was saved, not by his miracles. Aaron's eloquence did not endear him to God. And Miriam, the sister of Moses, who was en-

* 1 Cor. iv. 20. † Luke, x. 17, 20.

dued with the gift of prophecy, and by whom the Spirit of the Lord spoke, was struck with the leprosy. The Apostles themselves did not enter the kingdom of heaven because of the miracles they performed, nor on account of the gift of tongues conferred upon them, but because they *believed* in Christ, the Saviour of the world. Those of the first rank, and those of the meanest condition, must tread in the plain way of faith and humility, of repentance and mortification, and become new creatures in Christ through faith and love; in whom Christ also may live again by this faith. Whoever neglects this order, cannot expect to be accounted one of the family of Christ.

Christian love is that new vital principle by which a man is actuated to do good. This is attended with the life of Christ, and the powerful indwelling of the divine Spirit. To this purpose the Apostle desires, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God:* and the beloved disciple tells us, that "God is love, and that he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." † Whoever, therefore, feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart, feels no less than God himself there. However, in order that we might not deceive ourselves with a false and hypocritical, instead of a true and divine love, the Apostle has drawn up the character thereof, and represented it as a tree adorned with numerous branches: "Love," says he, "is patient, kind, &c." ‡ All which are the essential properties of Christians, and consequently the life of the new man.

To sum up all in a few words, God the Father is love, God the Son is love, God the Holy Ghost is love. The whole mystical body of Christ,

* Eph. iii. 19. † 1 John, iv. 16. ‡ 1 Cor. xiii.

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which is the church, is also knit together by the bond of love; so that there is but one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one baptism, one faith; and lastly, eternal life itself shall be nothing else but a full display and manifestation of the eternal love of God. Whoever therefore does not live in love, is certainly a dead member, if he may be said to be at all in the body of Christ. For as a dead member is not supported by that natural heat, which nourishes the body and every living member thereof, nor is sustained with proper food for its daily growth and increase; so a man who does not live in Christian love and charity, is destitute of spiritual life, and is dead to God and to Christ. He is without faith, a withered, lifeless branch; he has no part in God, in Christ, and the Holy Ghost; and he is altogether without the pale of the Christian church, and shall for ever be banished from life eternal, and excluded from the presence of that God, who has declared himself to be Love.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

God hath no respect to the Works of any one; but judges of Works according to the Heart.

WHEN the Prophet Samuel, by the commandment of God, went to anoint David king, he entered his father's house, and offered to anoint his first-born; but the Lord said to him: "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord

seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."* By this example, God declares on the one hand, he has no regard to any man's person, be he ever so great and eminent, when his heart is destitute of piety, love, faith, and humility: and on the other, that he esteems persons and works according to the inward spirit and intention of the mind, and thence allows or disallows them. Moreover, all gifts and endowments, how considerable soever they be, and how admirable, great, and pompous they may appear in the eyes of men, in no wise please the Lord, unless they be accompanied with a pure heart, a heart that has a steady respect to the honour of God and the profit and edification of our neighbour; and which at the same time, is freed from pride and arrogance, from self-love, and self-interest, and any of those sinister views which are apt to mingle with the works of a Christian.

For a fuller proof of what has been said, consider the example of Lucifer, the fairest and most beautiful angel which heaven contained. No sooner did he stain the gifts of God with self-love and self-honour, (not considering that he was bound to advance thereby the glory of God, who had conferred them upon him;) but he was transformed into a devil, and being cast down from heaven, was shut out from the glorious presence of God. If ever, therefore, our works shall be acceptable to God, they ought to be in pure faith towards God, and in sincere love to our neighbour, being cleared from the spots of self-love, self-honour, and self-interest, as much as possibly can be in this state of infirmity. To this end St. Paul tells us, "Though I speak with the tongues of

* 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal :" * that is, I am altogether vain and unprofitable. In truth, God regards not fluency of speech, but a humble heart; not arts, learning, wit, or ability, but he weighs the *spirit* of a man, whether it be bent upon promoting its own honour and interest, or the glory of God, and the profit of men. Nor does God respect a faith by which mountains might be removed, and the eyes of the beholders attracted from all sides, if a man seek thereby his own honour and glory. But the Lord looks with the greater affection upon him who "is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at his word." † In short, if a man distribute all that he has to the poor, or give up his body to be burned, it will be all to no purpose, if it be sullied with self-honour and self-complacency. It is the heart only and the inward intention of the mind, which the Lord regards. This fully appears from many instances recorded in Scripture.

Both David and Saul attended the service of God, but with a different effect. David, Manasseh,‡ Nebuchadnezzar, and Peter, after repentance, obtained mercy; Saul, Pharaoh, and Judas, on the contrary, fell short of it, on account of the different principle which swayed their minds. Pharaoh ‖ and Saul, § no less than Manasseh, used the same prayer, "Lord I have sinned!" but they received different rewards. The prayer of Hezekiah, Joshua, and Gideon, ¶ by which they required a sign, from heaven, is approved and praised; the Pharisees doing the same are rejected and reproved.** The Publican and the Pharisee prayed

* 1 Cor. xiii. 1. † Isaiah, lxvi. 2. ‡ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13.
‖ Exod. ix. 27. § 1 Sam. xv. 24.
¶ Isa. xxxviii. 7. Jos. x. 12. Judg. vi. 37. ** Matt. xvi. 4.

both in the temple; but both are not approved. * The Ninevites fasted;† the Jews and Pharisees did the same: ‡ but the former were received, and the latter rejected. "Wherefore, say they have we fasted, and thou seest us not?" ‖ The poor widow, who cast into the treasury but two mites, is praised by Christ; whereas, he that gave more is not. § Herod and Zaccheua both rejoice at the sight of Christ; but they had most different rewards. ¶ This proceeds from no other cause than the heart, and that moving principle by which it is swayed, and which God chiefly regards. He accepts those works only which flow from unfeigned faith, sincere love, and true humility: for whatever our gifts or works may be, if pride, self-love, and the contagion of filthy lucre, infect them, they are at once rejected by the Lord.

CHAP. XXXIV.

God is the sole Author of our Salvation.

"BUT of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." ** By this remarkable sentence, St. Paul teaches us that all things necessary for our salvation are merited by Christ Jesus our Lord. When we were ignorant of the way of life, he was made *wisdom unto us;* when we were sinners, he was made our *righteousness;* when we were an abomination before

* Luke, xviii. 14. † Jonah, iii. 5. 10. ‡ Matthew, vi. 16.
‖ Isaiah, lviii. 3. § Luke, xxi. 3.
¶ Luke, xxiii. 8. Luke, xix. 6. ** 1 Cor. i. 30.

God, he was made our *sanctification;* and when we were in a state of damnation, he became our *redemption.* It is therefore most certain, that man does not contribute so much as one jot to his salvation. Sin indeed man could commit of himself, but he was not able to justify himself again; he could lose, but not recover himself; kill, but not restore to life; he could submit himself to the devil, but could not shake off his spiritual fetters, or regain his former freedom. As a dead carcase cannot quicken itself again, so men "being dead in sins,"* as the Apostle declares, cannot raise themselves again to life. We did not contribute so much as one hair towards our creation, neither do we perform any thing towards our redemption, regeneration, and sanctification, which are far greater transactions than the creation itself.

Hence it was necessary, that the Son of God should take human nature upon him, to recover what was lost in Adam, and to revive those that were dead in sins and trespasses. That this may the better be effected, we ought to represent to ourselves the traveller in the Gospel, who, falling among thieves, was cruelly wounded and bruised by them, and at last utterly disabled from helping himself again.† Him, therefore, the good Samaritan receives into his arms, binds up his sores, sets him on his beast, leads him to an inn, and omits nothing that a faithful physician could administer to a sick and languishing person. And as the traveller also shewed himself obsequious to his physician, and strictly followed the directions prescribed by him; we ought to act likewise, if we desire to be healed of our distemper. We ought to *suffer* the healing hand of the Lord, and

* Eph. ii. 1. † Luke, x. 30.

not to resist, when he attempts the cleansing of our wounds; and when, after having poured in wine and oil, he binds them up. To obtain the blessed effect of these spiritual operations, we must wholly resign ourselves to him, who alone is able to save us; and then we may trust to the goodness of God, that on his side he will not fail to restore us to health and soundness. No sooner does a sinner repent of his former conduct, but he begins his happy return towards the Lord, grieving for his former transgressions, and yielding that his wounds be washed with the sharp wine of contrition, and the sweetening oil of heavenly comforts. Whoever, I say, complies with these preparatory terms, in him, Christ, by his grace, works an unfeigned faith, attended with all the fruits it produces, righteousness, life, peace, joy, comfort, and salvation. By this means, man is renewed to the image of God, who now "worketh in him both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." *

It is not in the power of man by nature to forsake his beloved sin. The Scripture calls the natural man a "servant of sin," † and one that is "sold under sin," ‡ who can do nothing but sin; according to that of the Prophet, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may you also do good that are accustomed to do evil." ‖ "The grace of God, however, that brings salvation, hath appeared to all men by the Gospel, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we may live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." § This is offered us by the word of grace; and it is

* Phil. ii. 13. † John, viii. 34. ‡ Rom. vii. 14
‖ Jer. xiii. 23. § Tit. ii. 11.

this grace which excites, teaches, and allures fallen man; which provokes and influences him to renounce sin, and to submit to the discipline of grace. And these divine admonitions, suggested by the Word, sweetly conspire with the inward testimony of the conscience; so that a man is convinced both from without and from within of his disorderly life, and of the necessity of quitting it, in order to preserve his soul from everlasting destruction. Whoever lives in sin, lives in opposition to God and his own conscience.

When a man yields to the suggestions and exhortations of divine grace, and proving obedient to the Word, begins to withdraw from his vicious life, then the grace of God effects in him all those virtues which the Gospel requires. It is then that faith springs up in the soul, the original principle of all other virtues. This is followed by love, and all Christian graces, which grow as so many fruits on the tree of faith. It is then also that light begins to shine in the midst of darkness. But as it is impossible that darkness should be able to enlighten itself, so it is also impossible for fallen man to raise himself from darkness to light. Hence the Psalmist says, "For thou wilt light my candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." * Let a man open his eyes ever so much, he will never be enlightened, whilst the light of the sun is withdrawn from his sight.

Thus the grace of God, or rather Christ himself, is that clear and serene light, risen on all men "that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death." † "He enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world:" ‡ that is, he manifests

* Psalm, xviii. 28. † Luke, i. 79. ‡ John, i. 9.

himself to all, and offers his grace to all. He, I say, is the light of the whole world; he shews the way of life to all men; and leaving us his own example for imitation, he goes before us like a good shepherd, and guides his flock into the path in which they are to walk. He sought us out as his lost sheep, and even now daily seeks and allures us. Nay, more; he still follows us closely, calls after us, and wooes us to his love, in as endearing a manner as a bridegroom does his bride. O that men did not love sin and darkness rather than light and grace! As a physician, applying himself to his patient, says, 'beware of this, lest you die; you hinder the workings of the medicine by an irregular life, so that you cannot be made whole:' so Jesus Christ, the true Physician of souls, says: "My son, I beseech thee, incline thy mind to true repentance; utterly forsake all thy sins; shake off thy pride, thy covetousness, thy carnal propensities, thy wrath, and thirst of revenge, with the other works of the old man. If this change be not wrought in the mind, thou must surely die; and the precious medicine extracted from my blood and merit can profit thee nothing, whilst thy disorderly life hinders their healing effect. It was for this cause I gave it in charge to my Apostles before all things, to preach repentance: and I myself called sinners to it while I conversed with them upon earth; because an impenitent heart never can partake of my merits."

Whoever hears that either sin must be forsaken, or eternal condemnation endured, must, of necessity, be brought to some serious consideration about the state of his soul. He is struck with a double conviction; the veracity of the Word of God, and the power of his own conscience, leaving so strong an impression upon him, as to set

him beyond all doubts about the truth of this matter. It is true, God hath freely promised remission of sin to all men; but it is under this condition, that they *repent*, and turn themselves unfeignedly to the Lord. Thus the Prophet says, "If the wicked shall turn from his wickedness, he shall live thereby. None of his sins that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him:" * where we see that repentance and remission of sin are inseparably linked together. Christ, the Son of God, in no other sense promises life eternal to those that believe in his name. The nature of faith must, however, be more fully enquired into. This faith is a very active principle in the soul. It daily strives against the old man; it tames the flesh, and subjects it to the Spirit; it converts the whole man; it subdues and vanquishes sin; it purifies the heart, which is the fountain of all evil. He is a true believer who turns from the world, from sin and the devil, to God, and seeks rest and comfort wholly and entirely in the blood, death, and merit of Christ, without the works of himself, or of any other man whatsoever; the blood of Christ being a perfect ransom for all the infinite debts which the soul has contracted.

Whoever, therefore, imagines that his sins may be pardoned, although he desist not from them, is most miserably deluded. He deceives himself with a false faith, which he has assumed to himself, and the dreadful effects of which he is exposed hereafter to feel. He can never expect to be saved without true repentance. Of this we have a plain instance in the case of Zaccheus the publican, who, having a sound apprehension of the

* Ezek. xxxiii. 16, 19.

doctrine of faith and conversion, freely acknowledged that to be true faith by which a man is turned from sin to God, and in this order hopes to obtain a gracious pardon from Christ, and an interest in his merit, so as to rely upon it with a filial trust and an unshaken firmness of mind. In this manner did he understand the word of our Lord, "repent and believe the Gospel: that is, desist from sin, trust in my merits, and expect forgiveness of sin from me alone. Hence Zaccheus says to Christ, "Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing by false accusation, I restore fourfold."* In these words he does not commend his own works at all, but extols the grace of God, which had taught him the way of true repentance. As if he had said; "O Lord, I am so thoroughly grieved at the fraudulent practices which I have committed against my neighbour, that I will not only restore fourfold unto him, but will also bestow half my goods on the poor. Wherefore, Lord, since I confess my sin, and fully resolve to leave it, I now embrace thee with a filial faith, and beseech thee to receive me again into thy grace and favour." And no sooner is this resolution taken, but the Physician declares, "This day is salvation come to this house. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

This is true repentance and conversion, carried on by a faith which is the work of God within us. God himself will begin, advance, and finish at last, the great work of our salvation, if we only yield to his Spirit, and do not resist him wilfully, as did the refractory Jews of old; of whom the Apostle says; "It was necessary that

* Luke, xix. 8.

the word of God should first have been spoken to you. But seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourself unworthy of everlasting life, we turn to the Gentiles." * It is, therefore, our duty to take the advice of the physician, after the manner of the sick, and to obey his precepts and prescriptions. As the physician first explains the nature of the disease, so the Lord lays open the spiritual disease of the heart, and then, as a faithful physician, warns us against hurtful things, lest the healing virtue of the precious blood of Christ be obstructed, and at last rendered ineffectual.

No sooner does man, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, withdraw from sin, but the grace of God begins to operate in him, and to endue him with new gifts. Without this, he is not sufficient to think any good thought of himself, much less to do any good work. Whenever such a person discovers any good motions arising in his mind, he attributes every good desire to divine grace; "By the grace of God I am what I am." † Whoever, therefore, complies with this order of salvation, to him the merit of Christ and his perfect obedience, are fully imputed, as if he himself had made a complete atonement for all his transgressions: but no wicked person, and no contemner of this dispensation, has a share in the imputation of the merit of Christ.

God, when he works in us and through us, crowns and commends those things as our own, of which he himself is the chief author. "Without me," saith Christ, "ye can do nothing;" ‡ that is, no good; for by nature we are ready enough to do evil without him. The doing of evil is our own property; as the doing of good is entirely the

* Acts, xiii. 46. † 1 Cor. xv. 10. ‡ John, xv. 5.

property of God. Therefore let no flesh glory in any thing. Happy is the man that refrains from sin, and gives up his will to the Lord. Christ uses all his endeavours to gain our love and affections, and to wean us more and more from the profane love of the world. He applies the most endearing expressions, both in his word, and to our hearts. He seeks and allures us; and before even we remember him, he bestows upon us tokens of his love and kindness: and this for no other end, but that we might at last forsake our beloved sin, and partake of the blessed effect of his blood and merits.

CHAPTER XXXV.

All wisdom, arts, and sciences, yea, the knowledge of the whole Scripture and of Divinity, are vain, without a Holy and Christian life.

SINCE in Love are contained all the duties of a Christian, and since the whole life of Christ was nothing but the purest and most cordial love, therefore St. Paul, under the name of charity or love, has comprehended the whole life of a Christian. * It is the property of true love, to respect God alone in every thing, and not self. It refers all to God; it does not love or honour self; it is not intent upon personal glory or interest: but it undertakes every thing with a free and disin-

* 1 Cor. xiii.

terested regard to God and man. He who is endued with Christian love, loves God and his neighbour with pure affection, because God is the sovereign good, to which we ought to adhere. Whoever, therefore, is destitute of the purity of this love, must of necessity prove a hypocrite amidst all his pretences and boasts. In whatever he undertakes, he seeks himself, and not purely God, as he ought to do. For this reason, his love is false, be his boasts what they may. If such a man had all the Scriptures committed to memory, and could expound them with the tongue of angels, yet would he still prove as sounding brass, without life and motion. For as no natural food can nourish the body, unless it be converted into the juices and blood, so also the word and the sacraments are unavailing, if they be not converted into a man's life; and if a new, spiritual, and holy man, be not begotten thereby.

Hence St. Paul says, "Though I have the gift of prophesy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."* As if he had said, if I pursue mine own honour by those gifts and attainments, and seek any thing besides the honour of God, and the good of my neighbour, then I am an abomination before the Lord, and not at all acceptable in his sight. This is intimated by that saying of our Lord; "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew

* 1 Cor. xiii.

you; depart from me ye that work iniquity:" * for you have not respected me alone in what you have done, but rather your own selves.

This is again attested by St. Paul: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." † But can it be possible (some may say,) to give all to the poor, and yet be destitute at the same time of love or charity? Yes; there may be a love which is not altogether single in what it performs, but biassed by sinister designs, and by some temporal interest, or the applause of men, or any such selfish objects, whereby the best of actions are too often corrupted. Of this nature was the charity of the Pharisees of old, who offered abundance of sacrifices, and persuaded others to adorn the temple with magnificent gifts, and to bring sacrifices of great price. But whilst they suffered themselves to be led away by pride and ambition, which mingled with their very worship, they forgot to shew mercy to the poor, and to practise that "undefiled religion," whereby the fatherless and the widows are to be supported and visited. ‡ For this preposterous charity, the Lord reproved them, saying; "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers, therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." ‖

In this perverse religion they have many followers, even at this time. Such are those who bequeath large legacies to temples and monasteries, that priests and friars who enjoy them, may make long prayers for such as bestow them. This truly is a false and deceitful love; for those who per-

* Matt. vii. 22.
† 2 Cor. xiii.
‡ James, i. 27.
‖ Matt. xxiii. 14.

form these acts, do not so much regard the honour of God as their own. He that is *justified by faith* shall live; and whosoever is thus justified, lives in true repentance, and by daily mortification of his flesh, becomes himself a sacrifice unto the Lord. He spends his time in continual acts of love and charity; flowing from a *disinterested* principle, free from self-honour and self-love, and entirely directed to advancing the glory of God. Therefore, O man, if thou yieldest thy body to be burnt, and art void at the same time of this pure and sincere love, thou dost nothing in all such performances. And what do they profit themselves, who torture their bodies? They generally are puffed up with a conceit of their singular sanctity, and thus setting forth their own pompous religion and will-worship, they do not regard God in what they do, so much as catch at the applause of men. Nay, some are blinded to such a degree by the spirit of delusion and error, as to suffer themselves to be burnt in defence of conceits such as these. They expect thereby to be enrolled in the list of such martyrs as were slain for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; when in truth they seek not Christ, but themselves, and rise not to defend his honour, but their own opinions. This is called by St. Paul, an *energy of delusion*, and a *working of Satan.** It is not the punishment, but the cause, which makes a martyr. Such martyrs as these, the devil has had even amongst the Heathens themselves; many of whom were so far blinded in their understandings, as contentedly to die for the defence of their idols, and to be made a sacrifice to the devil himself. And is not the same done at this day amongst

* 2 Thes. ii. 9, 11.

Christians, under the specious name of church and the christian faith? And as the Heathens, to gain an immortal name, persuaded themselves they did well in what they endured, so self-love and vain-glory have so far besotted some monks, and other persons even in our age, as that they have murdered kings and princes, to support the better their church, or the *Catholic cause*, as they call it, which they supposed to be in danger. If such men are made to suffer again, it is manifest they do not suffer for the sake of Christ, nor are they to be accounted his martyrs. They are martyrs to the bishop of Rome, to their own conceit, and to a thirst after vain-glory, with which they are carried away. Thus much concerning false love, to which man is seduced by an erroneous and deceitful light.

It remains, therefore, that without a sincere love to God and our neighbour, and a holy and Christian life attending it, all arts and sciences, gifts and attainments, profit nothing. Wisdom, how great soever it may be, yea, though it be as great or greater than that of Solomon, is nothing; and the knowledge of the whole Scripture, and universal divinity, if it be without love, must, necessarily, degenerate into a poor, empty speculation. All works whatsoever, and martyrdom itself, (if so it be called,) are to no purpose without this essential character of love. For to know the will of God and his word, and not to live up to them as a rule, only increases our condemnation, as the Lord plainly affirms; "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin."*

* John, xv. 22.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Of the hidden Manna.

"TO him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." * By this Scripture we are taught, that no man can taste the inward sweetness of heavenly joy and comfort hidden in the Word, who does not first vanquish his own flesh and the world, with all the pomps and lusts thereof, and the devil himself. But those that crucify their flesh daily, with all its desires and lusts, by serious contrition and repentance, who die daily to themselves and to the world, and to whom this life is a cross and affliction; these are divinely fed with the heavenly manna, and drink the sweet nectar of paradise. Those, on the other hand, that love the pleasures of this world rather than those of heaven, render themselves altogether unfit to taste the hidden manna, preserved for him alone that overcometh. The reason is, because *like things* (according to the Proverbs) rejoice *in their like;* and things of a contrary nature do not unite one with another. Since, therefore, the word of God is *spiritual,* it is no wonder that worldly minds take no pleasure in it. For

* Rev. ii. 17.

as the body receives no strength from the food which the stomach does not concoct; so the soul receives no strength from the divine word, unless it be entirely converted into itself, that is, into its own life and nature. Yea, as a man that is sick of a fever, acquires a *distempered* appetite, and deems the coursest trash more pleasant than wholesome food; so those that are sick of a spiritual fever, that is, of the love of the world, of pride, and covetousness, loath the good word of God, as bitter and insipid food. Those, on the other hand, that have the Spirit of God, find in it a hidden manna, and a secret sweetness, which transcends all other delights; but then it is not to be tasted by such as are carried away with the pleasures of a profane world. Many hear the glad tidings of the Gospel, repeatedly, and yet are but little affected with what they hear. They do not feel any fervency of spirit, any sense of spiritual joy. The case is plain; they are not led by the good Spirit of God, but by the corrupt spirit of the world; nor have they heavenly, but earthly minds, which cannot receive the things of God.

Whoever, therefore, wishes to obtain a sound understanding in spiritual matters, to savour the word of God, and to eat of the hidden manna, he ought by all means to conform his life to the word which he reads, and to the life of Christ which is set before him. It is then that the Lord feeds the humble with grace, satisfies the meek with his love, and supports the patient with his comfort; rendering his yoke pleasant, and his burden light unto them. For the sweetness of this heavenly manna cannot be tasted but under the yoke of Christ, according to the promise of the Lord: "He hath filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he hath sent empty away."* And again, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life."† Whence it follows, that a carnal and voluptuous man, who has no spiritual understanding or taste, cannot possibly perceive or relish the things of God. These must be apprehended in spirit, and in an inward tranquillity of mind, attended with great humility and fervent desires after God. In this order, the Word of God must be received and digested, if ever it afford a vital nourishment to the soul; which, if it be neglected, then truly the Word is no more than an empty sound, and an external letter.

As a man that hears the noise of a harp, and understands not its melody, receives no pleasure from it; so no man can perceive the virtue hidden in the Word, unless he endeavour to express it in his life, and thoroughly to conform himself to it in his spirit. For this reason, the Lord says: "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." This is the testimony of the hidden Spirit, who witnesses to the divine Word: and in like manner, the Spirit of the Word gives testimony to our spirit, whence both sweetly conspire, and so become one spirit. This is that new name, which no man knoweth but he that hath it. As no man perceives the sweetness of honey, but he that tastes it; so the name of this divine testimony, written in the hearts of good souls, no man knoweth but he that possesses it. He only understands the nature of heavenly comfort, and of divine visitations, who really tastes them. This name and testimony is called *new*, because they are the blessed effect of the *new birth*, and come *from above*.

* Luke, i. 53. † John, vi. 63.

Blessed is the man to whom God thus gives himself to be tasted! Thus were the Prophets of old fed with this heavenly bread, and sustained by the eternal Word proceeding from God, and communicating itself unto them. This made their tongues so free and so ready in the delivery of the divine oracles. And from this inward sense, with which they were so powerfully affected, the Holy Scripture has been derived, and handed down to us for our edification. Even at this day, God does not cease still to speak unto all men, and inwardly to feed them with his word: but alas! most men have shut their ears against his voice, and will rather hear the world than God, and follow their own lusts, than the motions of the good Spirit of God. They cannot eat of the hidden manna, because they greedily adhere to their carnal propensities, and contemn the tree of life, with the fruit thereof. But surely such men are awfully blinded, since they will not understand that God can afford infinitely greater pleasures, than this world is capable of imparting. It is certain, that whosoever has once tasted the goodness of God, will esteem the whole world, together with its most exquisite pleasures, to be nothing but gall and bitterness.

We know that our first parents were beguiled by the world, and that by eating of the forbidden tree, they brought no less an evil upon themselves than death itself: and yet we are so much besotted with the pleasures of this world, as to follow freely their steps, and to swallow the morsels of death without any fear or concern. Consider the promise of the Lord: "If any shall eat of me," the true tree, and the true bread of life, "he shall live for ever."* And what is it to *eat*

* John, vi. 51.

of him, but to believe in him, to rejoice in him, to delight in him, and to rest and take pleasure in nothing but him alone? The world bestows poor inconsiderable wages, and yet it is served with great labour and earnestness; whereas God entitles us to an eternal and never-fading reward; and yet with what sluggishness, coldness, and backwardness is his service performed! How few there are, who adhere to God with as much care and faith, loyalty and obedience, as profane worldlings do to mammon, and the world! We see them often take long and tedious journeys for a little money; but for the sake of heaven, it grieves them to move even a foot.

Many a scholar studies day and night to attain preferment and honour, who will hardly take time to say the *Lord's prayer* for the good of his soul. The men who avoid no labour to get the bread that perishes, will undergo none to procure that which is incorruptible. There are many who fear no difficulty, flee from no danger, and in an earthly warfare, stare even death in the face; influenced by no other motive than to gain a little fleeting fame, or at best, to be ranked among the nobles and heroes: whereas there is hardly one to be found that will enter into combat with the corrupt propensities of his flesh, although this is the way to obtain a kingdom in heaven. We see the victors of many nations, and the subduers of vast kingdoms, who little care to overcome themselves. There are infinite numbers who do not regard the loss of their immortal souls, if they can but gain the perishing goods of this world. All these, certainly, have not tasted the hidden manna of the divine Word; for they do not overcome the world, but are overcome by it. Whosoever will taste the sweetness of this heavenly

manna, must, for the sake of the love of God, despise the world, and overcome it. No sooner does he comply with these terms, but he is refreshed again with that comfort, which no man knows save he that receives it.

This, therefore, must be done. The tree of life must first be planted in us, before we can eat of its fruit: and the heart, that wishes to be quickened with heavenly comforts, ought first to be truly converted from the world to God. But we, being intoxicated with worldly pleasures, do not see that the joys of heaven are far more excellent than whatever this world affords. That which God gives, is infinitely more true and more substantial than all which the languishing creature can bestow. And that teaching which comes from above, through the inspiration of the divine Spirit, is far more sublime and solid than that which is conveyed to us by man's understanding, and imprinted on the mind with much toil and labour. The productions of nature are nobler and better than those which are fashioned of the finest gold by the hand of art; even so, one drop of divine consolation is more satisfactory, and incomparably better, than a whole ocean of worldly lust and pleasure. Whenever, therefore, thou desirest to taste any heavenly comfort, withdraw thy heart from the comfort of this world. As if the Lord were to say, 'If any will understand me, let him seriously attend to what I say; if any will see me, it surely behoves him to fix his eye upon me alone.' Who can doubt but that our heart and senses, and all the faculties of our souls, ought to be converted to God, and fixed on him alone, if ever we desire to see, hear, and understand God; nay, to taste him and his goodness? For thus he expresses himself in the Prophet; "When ye shall search

for me with your whole heart, ye shall find me." *

Many at this day are held in great admiration on a very light account. Oh! a learned man! they say, a rich man! a great man! a wise man! but scarcely any regard how meek, how humble, how patient, or how devout any man is. Of this perverse judgment there is no other cause, but that the people of this age only admire the *exterior* of a man, and pass by what is within the mind, which alone is worthy to be esteemed and valued. Let him that praises a man because he is a great traveller, and has seen many cities and countries, consider whether it be not far better to have seen God. Let him that values another, because he has served several monarchs and attended on emperors, kings, and princes, tell us whether it be not far more excellent to be the servant of God, to wait on the King of Heaven, to hear him speak in the heart, and to serve him faithfully? Many who enjoy nothing but the things of this world, will say; we have abundance of learned men and vast scholars in this age; arts and sciences are greatly advanced among us. But such men as these do not know the art of arts, the science of sciences, which is divine Love; a benefit preferable to all other knowledge and learning, but which is almost wholly extinct in this degenerate age, together with faith itself, that produces it. The number of those that are in truth divinely "taught of God," is but small; † and so of those that care to be instructed in the humble and meek life of Christ. Yea, to speak plainly, the most learned at this day are generally the most alienated from the life of God, and know but little of that truth which is in Jesus. They con-

* Jer. xxix. 13. † Isaiah, liv. 13.

fine knowledge to words and terms artfully contrived; when indeed solid erudition and learning consist not in *words*, but in *things*, and in a real and eternal wisdom. Upon the whole, whoever calls this age a wicked and degenerate age, seems not to be mistaken in his judgment.

Others will praise a man, because he keeps a rich and plentiful table, and fares deliciously every day; but they do not consider that the very crumbs dropping from God's table, are transcendently better than the choicest dishes of a wealthy and greedy glutton: and that the hidden manna, and the incorruptible bread descending from Heaven, and prepared by the Lord himself, afford the most savoury and most delicious food for nourishing the soul. Whoever enjoys God and his Word, is disgusted at nothing; and nothing can displease him: for he enjoys God in all. But what can rejoice him, who does not taste the sweetness of God, and the goodness of his Word? God alone is the joy of the soul. He infinitely surpasses all created joy and transient mirth. He is the eternal Light, which incomparably exceed sall created lights. May he be pleased to influence our hearts with his hidden pleasure! May he purify our spirits, and all the faculties of our souls! May he enlighten and quicken, rectify and revive all that is within us! And, O! when shall that glorious hour appear, in which the Lord will satiate us with his presence, and replenish us with all that he himself is! But as we are not yet prepared for so transcendent a joy, so we cannot partake of it, while we are confined to this state of imperfection. Let us, therefore, be content with the crumbs of comfort which fall from the Lord's table, and patiently wait for that time, wherein we shall be refreshed with his joy for evermore!

Hear the words of our blessed Saviour; "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."* Is it not, then, a preposterous thing to slight so great a favour, and to treat contemptuously the King of kings, who, like a heavenly guest, comes to see thee? Is it disgraceful to let a friend stand knocking without, and not to admit a man to thy presence, who has nothing at heart but thy welfare? How unaccountable then must it be to debar the great God from thy heart, who stands in no need of thy presents; but after the manner of princes, brings his own royal dainties with him when he approaches the house of a poor subject! He will feed thee with heavenly bread, and with that hidden manna which is preserved for those that overcome. When the Lord says, "Hear my voice, and open the door," he compares the heart of a man to a house full of noise and clamour, where musick, though ever so sweet and melodious, cannot be heard. So the voice of the divine Visitor cannot enter a profane heart, whilst it is hurried about with the cares and desires of this world. Such a heart closes the door against this Visitor, and consequently, cannot taste the sweetness of the celestial manna. But when this noise and tumult cease, it is then these secret whispers are best perceived in men. And O! that thou, with Samuel, couldest answer; "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth."†

The truth of this internal, spiritual, and heavenly supper is also attested by other Scriptures. The Apostle speaks of some, that "have been once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and

* Rev. iii. 20. † 1 Sam. iii. 10.

have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come."* By this we are taught, that in whomsoever the Holy Ghost freely resides, there the virtues and powers of the world to come, are also tasted. It is then that the soul feeds on that manna, which is hid in the sweet and mellifluous Word proceeding out of the mouth of God, and by which all the Saints live. The efficacy of this living Word was also tasted by the royal Prophet, when he burst forth into these words: "In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." † From this lively sense, he also invited others to an enjoyment of the same sweetness, saying, "Taste and see that the Lord is good. There is no want to them that fear him." ‡ Of the plenty and dignity of this heavenly banquet, he hath thus expressed himself: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. ‖ Thy loving kindness is better than life. § They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." ¶ And lastly, "Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation, say continually, Let God be magnified. But I am poor and needy, make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer, O Lord, make no tarrying." **

From all these, and many other places besides, it may abundantly be known, who those are that are inwardly fed with the good Word of God, and

* Heb. vi. 4. † Psalm, xvi. 11. ‡ xxxiv. 8, 9.
‖ xxiii. 5. § lxiii. 3. ¶ xxxvi. 8. * * Psalm, lxx. 4, 5.

with the hidden manna of the world to come; even those that are poor in spirit, and who entirely rely on divine comfort. These, I say, these only are worthy to taste of this heavenly manna, and of the divine gift, of which David speaks at large; "How amiable," says he, "are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." * By this Scripture we may understand, that the least pleasure of the world to come, infinitely exceeds all the joys of this world; and that one day passed there, is far more excellent than a thousand years here. Whoever has tasted these exquisite pleasures, will easily disdain the things of this life, as empty and insipid. The whole world becomes a burden, a trouble and vexation of spirit, to such a character. He is like one that is accustomed to delicious fare, and consequently cannot partake of what is coarse. This is so sacred a hunger and thirst, that none but God alone can satisfy it, and he only, by his love. This is that spiritual fulness with which the saints are satiated, according to that in the Canticles: "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." † These spiritual endearments the Lord bestows on his friends, in order to unite them the more closely to himself, and to make them sooner forget the perishing things of this world. A few crumbs of this bread, a few drops pressed from this heavenly vine, ought to excite our desires after that plentiful and abounding fountain, which shall be poured out hereafter.

In order that the Lord might excite in us so sacred a thirst, and that he might make us long

* Psalm, lxxxiv. 1, 2. † Cant. v. 1.

the more earnestly after such heavenly objects as these, it was expedient that he should first himself thirst upon the cross for our sakes.* As he himself satisfies and quenches our hunger and thirst; so ought we again to satiate his thirst and ardent desire of loving. He more fervently thirsts after us, than we do after him; according to that which he hath himself declared: "My meat is, to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work:" † and the will of God was to save men from everlasting destruction. It is certain, if we but thirsted after him, as he thirsts after us, we should then drink so plentifully of his Spirit, that even "rivers of living water would flow from our bodies:" ‡ that is, nothing should be seen in us, but what is spiritual, sweet, and agreeable. Nay, he would make us overflow as it were with a torrent of divine goodness and consolation, so that soul and body, and all that is within us, should triumphantly rejoice in the living God. For nothing is of so great and so divine an amplitude as a man's soul, after it has recovered its true freedom and liberty. Such a soul comprehends God, heaven, and earth. And again, nothing is less than a man's soul, if it be considered in that state of nothingness and humiliation, whereby it abases itself under God and all his creatures.

* John, xix. 28. † John, iv. 34. ‡ John, vii. 38.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Christ our True Light.

"GOD is light, and in him is no darkness at all: If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." * That we may the better understand the nature of light and darkness, it is necessary first to have the description of the light, as it is originally.

"God is light," saith St. John. But what is God? God is a spiritual, eternal, and infinite Being; God is almighty, merciful, gracious, righteous, holy, true, and only wise. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is unspeakable love and faithfulness; He is one in three persons; He is the most sovereign good, and all good essentially. And this is the true and everlasting light. Whence every one that departs from God, from his love, his mercy, his righteousness, and his truth, departs also from light itself, and must consequently fall into darkness: for without God, there is nothing but everlasting darkness. O how dark, therefore, is that soul in which God doth not dwell!

If God be light, then the devil must certainly be darkness; and if God be love, then the devil must be nothing but hatred and wrath, enmity

* 1 John, i. 5, 6, 7.

and envy, malice and uncharitableness, sin and wickedness. Whoever, therefore, turns himself to sin, turns himself to darkness and to the devil. Neither can he be delivered, till he turn back again, from darkness to light, from sin to righteousness, from vice to virtue, from the devil to God. And this is the work of a true and living faith which purifies the heart. Whosoever believes in Christ, daily repents, and turns from sin, and the devil to Christ Jesus. For even as Adam by sin turned himself from God to the devil, so we ought to withdraw again, by true repentance and faith, from the devil to God.

Hence it follows, that man, without being converted from sin to God, can never be truly enlightened. "For what communion hath light with darkness?" * Impiety and impenitence are wholly darkness, which consequently can have no fellowship with the light of the knowledge of Christ. So that it is absolutely impossible that those should be enlightened by the Spirit, and the light of eternal truth, who live in the darkness of unrighteousness. To this purpose, St. Paul says concerning the Jews: "When they shall be converted to the Lord, the veil will be taken away;" † that is, their darkness, blindness, and ignorance, shall be removed, and Christ shall give them light.

The greatest blindness, or thickest darkness that covers the minds of men, is the sin of unbelief, with the fruits resulting from it; such as pride, avarice, wrath, and the whole train of sensual lusts and pleasures. Wherever these take possession, it is impossible that a man should know Christ, the true Light of the world; much

* 2 Cor. vi. 14. † 2 Cor. iii. 16.

less can he savingly believe in him, trust in him, and obtain by him life everlasting. How should that man know the humility of the heart of Christ, whose heart abounds with pride and high-mindedness? How should he be acquainted with the meekness of the heart of Christ, who is full of bitter wrath and envy? How should he understand his marvellous patience, who delights in revenge, and is hurried about with a multitude of unruly passions? But whosoever does not understand the humility, meekness, and patience of Christ, he does not know Christ himself, nor believe in his holy name. For truly, if ever thou desirest to attain a sound knowledge of Christ, thou must by faith be transformed into the same heart which is in Christ; thou must experimentally perceive in thy heart, his meekness, his patience, and humility. It is then that thy knowledge becomes solid and substantial. As a plant or fruit is known by the taste or smell, so Christ, the tree of life, is known by tasting, and a sensible perception. Whenever thou tastest by faith the humility of Christ, his meekness, and his patience, thou then eatest of his fruit, and shalt find rest for thy soul. Thou enjoyest in Christ the favour and consolation of God, which is beyond all creature comfort. This is the only way to true rest and tranquillity of mind. For the grace and comfort of God cannot enter into a heart that is void of faith, and destitute of the meekness and humility of Christ. It is to the "*humble*, God gives grace." *

Upon the whole, how is it possible that Christ should profit a man that does not desire to have the least fellowship with him? And truly, all those that live in the darkness of sin, have no

* 1 Pet. v. 5.

fellowship with Christ, be their pretences what they will. For thus says St. John: "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have joint-fellowship one with another."* And in the following chapter he explains it more fully: "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth: he that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."†

As long, then, as a man continues in that dark and terrible cloud of sin, it is impossible he should be enlightened by Christ, the true Light of the world; and be thereby brought to a saving knowledge of God. Whoever will attain to a true knowledge of God and Christ, must firmly believe that God is nothing but grace and love. Now, no man can know what love is, but he that hath it; the knowledge of a thing being the result of a man's experience, of his sense, and of the works of truth which he performs. Whoever, therefore, is destitute of the exercise of love, (whatever words he may use about it,) continues an utter stranger to the nature of love; and what he is pleased to call love, is nothing but shew and pretence. And as Christ himself is nothing but love and humility, meekness and patience, and every true virtue, so a man that is not frequent in the performance of these and the like virtues, is alto-

* 1 John, i. 6, 7. † 1 John, ii. 8, 11.

gether ignorant of Christ and of the truth of his knowledge. He is but a superficial pretender to, and a vain usurper of his holy name, let his boasts be what they may. The Word of God is nothing but spirit. Whoever, therefore, does not live and walk in the Spirit, in no wise understands what the Word of God is, though he may dispute and argue ever so much about it. How shall a man tell us what love is, who never performed the least act of love? And how shall a man give an account of the nature of light, who, having been constantly confined to a dark dungeon, has never seen the light himself? What is the light in man but faith and charity, according to the saying of Christ: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." *

In a word, the holy life of Christ is nothing but love and charity. No sooner do we by faith learn from him true love and humility, meekness and patience, as he himself has engaged us to do, but we are transformed into his image, and enlightened with that true and eternal light, which he himself is; according to that exhortation of St. Paul: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give thee light." † From all this it evidently follows, that as many as do not awake from their spiritual lethargy, that is, from the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, and other agreeable pleasures that attend them, their souls cannot be enlightened by Christ, since they love darkness rather than light, and thereby indispose themselves for a reception of the divine light. It also hence appears that those, on the other hand, who

* Matt. v. 16. † Eph. v. 14.

truly embrace the life of Christ, and follow him in faith, are by him graciously enlightened, according to his promise: "I am the light of the world, he who followeth me (in faith and love, hope and patience, meekness and humility, fear of God, and in prayer, &c.) shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*

The substance of the whole is this: the true followers of Christ, and these only, freely enjoy the light of life, and are alone endued with true illumination and sound knowledge of Christ. And it is on account of this Christian faith and life, that true believers are called by the Apostle, a "light in the Lord. Ye were," saith he, "sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord:" † where by a *light*, he understands the principle of faith, and those Christian virtues that attend it. And again, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness: having put on the breast-plate of faith and love, and the helmet of salvation." ‡ Christ denies that the world (that is, carnal and unregenerate minds,) can ever "receive the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth." ‖

That there might be a perfect and absolute pattern amongst men, and a complete idea of virtue and goodness, the Son of God became also the Son of Man, and by his unspotted and holy life was made the public Light of the world, that so all men might follow him, believe in him, and receive light from him. Since, however, false Christians, own with their lips that Christ is the safe and great exemplar of virtue, and yet do not follow him in their life and actions; it is manifest,

* John, viii. 12. † Ephesians, v. 8.
‡ 1 Thess. v. 5, 8. ‖ John, xiv. 17.

that the very Heathens outdo the Christians in morals and virtue. The most eminent of the Gentiles, such as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, have highly recommended the study of virtue, and freely confessed, that "if virtue could be seen with bodily eyes, it would appear fairer, and with a more glorious lustre than even the morning-star." But, truly, none have had a fuller view of the beauty of virtue, than those who by faith have contemplated JESUS CHRIST, that unerring pattern of righteousness. These are those that have "handled the Word of life,* as St. John tells us. And, surely, if the Heathen have been so much absorbed by the love of virtue; how much more should a Christian be ravished with the transcendent beauty of Jesus Christ, who is the very essential virtue, and composed of nothing but pure love, and unspotted meekness; nay, who is GOD himself?

It was not without cause, therefore, that St. Paul preferred the love of Christ to all other knowledge or science: and with him we ought to pray, that we may experimentally "know this love of Christ which passeth knowledge," † that so we may thereby be "filled with all the fulness of God." Now there is no man that has the love of Christ in him, but he must necessarily also love the humility and meekness of Christ, and from sincere love to him readily embrace them. By this means he is still more and more enlightened, and day by day transformed into the image of Christ, "as from glory to glory." ‡ And the reason of this is evident; for God delights to give grace to the humble," ‖ as the Scripture tells us: agreeably to what St. Bernard says, "The rivers

* 1 John, i. 1.
† Eph. iii. 19.
‡ 2 Cor. iii. 18.
‖ 1 Pet. v. 5.

of grace, flow downwards, not upwards." They visit and refresh the valley, but will not rest upon mountains, or upon any thing that is high and lifted up. How should then the grace of the light and knowledge of God come to a man that walks not in the humble and holy life of Christ, but in the way of Lucifer? It is certain, that if there be any faith in us, and if this be attended with suitable fruits and practice, it will not leave us "barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."* In a humble soul Christ lives, and then also his Spirit rests upon it, (the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord,†) as truly as he rested upon Christ himself. For in whomsoever the light and the life of Christ dwell, in him is also Christ himself, who is the very light and life of a Christian. And this also is the reason that the gifts and graces of the divine Spirit rest upon a true Christian, as well as upon Christ himself.

Hence St. Peter, speaking to the Jews, exhorts them to repent, (or to be renewed in their minds:) "and ye shall," says he, "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."‡ Whence it plainly appears, that those who are in a state of faith and repentance, are the only men duly prepared for receiving the divine Spirit, the true enlightener of hearts. Whoever, therefore, desires to be delivered from the blindness of his heart, and from eternal darkness, yea, from the devil himself who inhabits it; let him faithfully follow Christ in true faith, in unfeigned conversion, and in a thorough newness of life. The nearer we are to Christ, the nearer we are to the eternal light; and the more closely

* 2 Pet. i. 8. † Isaiah, xi. 2, 3. ‡ Acts, ii. 38.

we adhere to unbelief, the more we adhere to darkness and to the devil himself. For even as Christ, faith, and all the virtues, are nearly allied and hang together as in a string, so in like manner are the devil, unbelief, and all the vices, and works of darkness, so nearly combined, as to render it almost impossible to conceive of one without the other.

Consider the Apostles of the Lord. They followed their master in faith, in contempt of the world, in denying themselves, in renouncing their possessions, and in living together in a sweet order and unity of spirit. By this means they were enlightened from above, and filled with the Holy Ghost.* With these terms the rich young man in the Gospel being unwilling to comply, he continued shut up in the darkness of the world, and was not enlightened unto eternal life.† "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."‡ And "he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth; because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."‖ To this purpose all the Sermons of Dr. Tauler are constantly directed. He makes it appear, that without the sincere exercise of faith, without a serious course of mortification, without self-denial, without a narrow search into one's own heart, and without the inward, calm Sabbath of the soul, no man can obtain or enjoy the Divine light. In short, in proportion as the works of darkness are destroyed in man by the Spirit of God, in that proportion is he illuminated, and no more. And again, in the same degree as the corrupt nature, the flesh, and the world, pride, and

* Acts, ii. 1.
† Luke, xviii. 23.
‡ 1 John, ii. 15.
‖ 1 John, ii. 11.

the lust of the eyes, domineer in a man, in that degree darkness is left in him, and the less of grace, of light, of spirit, of God, and of Christ is he possessed of. Therefore it remains, that without unfeigned repentance, and a daily renovation of mind, no man can be truly enlightened from above.

Whoever yields too much to one sin, undoubtedly opens a door to many others. Sin never comes alone, but, like a noxious weed, spreads itself on every side, and gains more ground every day. And as the darkness becomes greater accordingly as the sun retires, so as the holy life of Christ departs from us, the darkness certainly increases, and sin grows thicker around us; till at length the man is swallowed up in an eternal night of darkness. On the contrary, if a man give himself up to the practice of one virtue alone, he gains thereby an opportunity of practising all the rest in time, and cannot but daily proceed from one to another. This admirable connexion is represented by St. Peter as a chain, in which all the rings are sweetly linked together, and none is suffered to separate from another. "Add," he says, "to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity;" superadding one virtue continually to another, and crowning all at last with this promise: "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."* To sum up all in a few words, whoever is not earnestly bent on the

* 2 Pet. i. 5.

exercise of such heavenly virtues as these, certainly knows not Christ, and is void of all saving knowledge: whereas, if a man by faith grow in the practice of virtue, he also grows in Christ himself. On the contrary, the wrathful, the covetous, the proud, the impatient, do not grow in Christ, but in the devil, in whom they live.

It is the Apostle's command, that we should grow up "unto a perfect man." * As a child gradually grows up to the stature of a perfect man; so a Christian ought daily to grow in the practice of faith and virtue, till he become a perfect man in Christ. "He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." † As if the Apostle had said, that Christ by his death had indeed bore our sins, and blotted them out; not that we should continue in the service of sin, but that dying to sin, and living to Christ, we should shew forth the fructifying power of the death of Christ. Without this order practically applied to the mind, it is manifest, that the purging away of our old sins, and the atonement made for them, can profit us nothing. Our sin is never forgiven till we entirely quit it, repent of it, and embrace Christ with an unfeigned belief. If we preserve but one sin alive, the mortifying of all the rest, if that were possible, would avail nothing; but we should bear the burden thereof in the world to come, without any hope of expiation or forgiveness. A man may be damned for the sin of wrath alone; whereas, if he had seriously corrected and quitted it, he would have obtained pardon not only for that, but even for other sins of which he stood guilty. But neglecting to lay hold on this

* Eph. iv. 13. † 2 Pet. i. 9.

der in time, he is one of those that are "blind, and he forgets that he was purged from his old sins!"

By this we are given to understand the necessity of repentance, and a thorough change of life: for although Christ died for our sins, and abolished them with the perfect price of his holy blood, yet can we never partake of that merit, unless we *repent*. Without repentance this precious blood profits nothing. And though every man has a promise of pardon for his sin through the merit of Christ, yet that promise belongs not to the unbeliever, nor to the impenitent, but to those only who truly repent and reform their lives; and that too, according to the true standard which is set them. Those sins shall not be remitted, which a man will not leave; but those only which he is willing to quit, and for which he heartily grieves. And here the word of the Lord is verified, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them;" that is, remission of sin, and life everlasting consequent upon it. *

Let us suppose a man, who, for many years together, has been the servant of covetousness, after the example of Zaccheus; or of lust, as Mary Magdalene; or of wrath and revenge, as Esau. Let us also suppose that this man, as soon as he heard that either these sins were to be entirely left, or that the death and blood of Christ would else profit him nothing, becomes a true suppliant to God, and cries out to him: "Oh God! how am I grieved for this! O Lord, be merciful, be merciful!" and then forms a new resolution, desists from his sin, craves pardon and grace, and believes in Christ. It is then that all his former offences are, of mere grace, freely re-

* Matt. xi. 5.

mitted to him. No merit of his own is regarded, but solely the death and blood of Christ shed for him. This is the only way in which a returning sinner is to obtain mercy. Whereas, he that does not fully resolve to detest his former sins, his covetousness, wrath, usury, pride, lust, &c. shall hope for ever in vain for a remission of sin, being condemned to everlasting confusion and anguish. He shall be obliged to satisfy for himself the justice of God, and yet will never be able to perform it. On earth he was destitute of that faith which purifies the heart; * and so his sin and lust, which have not been mortified here, shall for ever torment him there. It is for this reason, that St. Paul so earnestly inculcates, "that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." † And therefore either the loss of this heavenly kingdom must certainly follow, or the narrow way of *self-denial* must be heartily chosen.

Wherever this unfeigned conversion to, and faith in God, are wrought in the soul, there pardon and divine grace are freely bestowed. And where these are, there is Christ also; without whom no grace can be obtained. Where Christ is, there are likewise his precious merit, and the full ransom which he has paid for our sins, and which is appropriated to the penitent soul. Again, where these are, there is righteousness; and with righteousness, peace; and with peace, sweet serenity of conscience. It is then, that righteousness and peace kiss each other in the soul. ‡ This clearness of conscience is attended with the Spirit of God himself; who being a spirit of joy, will certainly pour forth the "oil of gladness," ‖ and

* Acts, xv. 9.
† Gal. v. 21.
‡ Psalm, lxxxv. 10.
‖ Heb. i. 9.

quicken the soul with a foretaste of life eternal itself, which shall be joy and glory without end.

This is that eternal light of eternal life, that eternally triumphant joy, with which those only are crowned that live in Christ, and exercise daily repentance. This is the beginning of a spiritual life, as the death of Christ is the basis and foundation on which it is raised. On the contrary, where there is no repentance, there is no pardon of sin; where there is no inward remorse and spiritual sorrow, there grace cannot have a place. Where these are wanting, there Christ himself is wanting, together with the whole extent of his merits and satisfaction, be the pretences of the *false* Christian ever so fair and specious. Where this satisfaction is not thoroughly applied to the soul, there is no righteousness, and consequently no peace, no good conscience, no comfort. Where there is no comfort of heart, there is no Holy Ghost, no joy, no calmness of mind, and no life eternal; but death, hell, condemnation, and everlasting darkness. Behold, O man! how true it is, that none of those who refuse to follow Christ in their lives, by an unfeigned repentance, can ever get rid of the blindness of their hearts, and of everlasting darkness.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Of an Antichristian life.

SINCE Christ, and Faith in him, are universally renounced, and almost wholly extirpated by the

corrupt *lives* of Christians, what shall his doctrine profit us? For his doctrine, with the Word and Sacraments, is delivered to us for no other end, but that it be inwardly digested, and converted, as it were, into our very life and spirit. As from a good seed springs up good fruit, so from the Word and Sacraments should spring up within us the noble life of regeneration, or the new birth; the new, holy, and spiritual man; or to speak all in one word, a true and real Christian. For he that is a Christian, must needs be born again of the Spirit * and the Word, † and believe and live in Christ, as in the primary and productive principle of the life of grace. As certainly as a child is begotten by his father, so truly must our souls be begotten again of God and of Christ, by means of faith.

When, therefore, we do not nobly resolve to strive against the depraved bent of our flesh, and to digest the doctrine of Christ into our life and nature; nay, when we contradict the *Christian* doctrine by an *anti-christian* life, by irreligion and profaneness; does it not plainly convince us, that we are not begotten of God, nor born of Christ? And, therefore, what will Christ's *doctrine* profit us, when we are sure that our *life* does not correspond with it at all? Will our vain boasts of the light of the Gospel, and of a primitive church, do any good, when we evidently walk in darkness? It is on this account the light deservedly retires from us, and the world begins to be overspread with darkness and false doctrines, with errors and with seducing spirits. And that we might beware of these, our blessed Saviour hath left us this gracious warning; "Whilst ye have

* John, iii. 3, 5. † James, i. 18.—1 Pet. i. 23.

the light, walk in the light, lest darkness come upon you;" that is, lest ye be led away into all kinds of errors and delusions, into blindness and hardness of heart, into darkness and prejudices, which indispose the mind for the very reception of the light of the Gospel. This was the unhappy fate which befel Pharaoh, the Jews, and Julian the Apostate; who, being in the end convicted by the stinging reproaches of his own conscience, exclaimed openly, and to his own confusion, that Christ both lived and reigned, and was both Lord and God; saying, "Thou hast overcome, O Galilean; thou hast overcome." It would have been better for him to have said, Lord, have mercy upon me! but alas! this was entirely out of his reach, in consequence of the hardness of his heart, contracted by an uninterrupted course of sinning, and by having rejected the mercy of Christ, and despitefully trampled on his most precious blood.

This hardness of heart, is that terrible darkness which, in the end, overtakes all such as refuse to walk in the light whilst they have it. It is the just punishment inflicted on those that blaspheme the truth, as Pharaoh did, when he asked: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord." * Therefore it was but just that he should the more grievously feel the over-ruling power of God, by being made an example to the whole world, and a lasting monument of the indignation of the Lord, and of the weakness of men who vainly presume to oppose him. In like manner were the Jews of old struck with blindness and hardness of heart, when they refused to hearken to the

* Exodus, v. 2.

voice of the Lord, having been warned by Moses long before, that this would certainly come to pass: "The Lord," says he, "shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart." * This actually did befal them, as may be seen, Isaiah, chap. vi. 9, 10, 11, 12. Whereby it is manifest, that such hardness of heart is the most righteous punishment of unbelief, of contempt of God, and the heavenly truth declared by him; according to that of St. Paul: "With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." † Whence it plainly appears, why God is used to strike men with such terrible blindness and hardness of heart; namely, because they "*receive not the love of the truth.*"

And indeed, the man from whom God takes away his grace, is surely most wretched and miserable; neither can he of himself at any time return into the right way. As a proof of this, we have the examples of Pharaoh and Julian. He from whom the Lord removes his light, must of necessity live in darkness. God removes it, however, from those only who refuse to walk in it; neither does he take his grace from any, but those that boldly reject it. It is in this sense the words of St. Paul are to be taken; "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth." ‡ But truly the Lord hath pity on all them who freely receive his mercy; as, on the contrary, he hardeneth those that reject and blaspheme the tender of his grace.

* Deut. xxviii. 28. † 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. ‡ Rom. ix. 15. 18.

And it is this wilful resistance for which St. Paul reproves the Jews: "It was necessary," says he, "that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed:" * that is, as many as did not resist and obstinately cast away the word of grace, or the means of faith. It was because the Jews were guilty of this, that they could not believe: for the Lord hath not *ordained* those to eternal salvation, who disdainfully reject his word, and prove disobedient to the offer of his grace. The ordination to life eternal, is fully brought to pass in Jesus Christ, with this promise annexed, that God offers his grace to all by the Gospel; which, whosoever receive, are ordained to eternal life; and whosoever reject, thereby "judge themselves unworthy of eternal life," as St. Paul expresses it. That is, by their own fault they make themselves unworthy of that blessing, and debar themselves from that universal grace which is displayed in the Gospel; and so putting their own names out of the book of life, which is Christ, they resist the good word of God by their own contumacy, and, consequently, cannot obtain that true saving faith, which the Word begets.

And here let us not deceive ourselves, O Christians! by vainly supposing that they only reject the word of God, who, being without the pale of the Church, do not outwardly embrace the faith and doctrine of Christ; (such as Mahometans and Jews;) and that those who profess the Christian

* Acts, xiii. 46, 48.

faith, and adhere to the doctrine of the Gospel, cannot possibly be deemed wilful despisers of the tender of mercy. Certain it is, that all who will not follow the footsteps of Christ, nor take his life upon them, nor walk in the light, fall under this heavy charge. And for this cause God is often moved to take from them even the light of that word, and of that doctrine, of which they made their boast. "I," saith Christ, "am the light of the world; he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." * That is, whoever follows the example of Christ, and lives his life, shall be in no danger of being misled by any delusion and error. He shall also escape that blindness and hardness of heart, which an empty professor of the Christian faith draws upon himself.

Pause to consider here on the one hand, the many excellent, noble, learned, ingenious, and powerful men of this world; and on the other, the errors, blindness, and deviations, into which they are plunged. Truly, those delusions arise from no other cause, but because men do not live in Christ, but are averse to the imitation of his holy life; and therefore cannot have the light of life. From the same source also proceed those "workings of Satan," and those "strong delusions," together with all the "lying wonders" mentioned by St. Paul, and which, I fear, will more and more increase upon us, because there is hardly a man to be found who is willing to follow Christ; and by this means, to preserve himself from delusion and error. "For what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord, therefore, hath Christ with Belial?" † Purity

* John, viii. 12. † 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

of doctrine, and divine knowledge, cannot remain with those that live in the devil, in darkness, in pride, in covetousness, and filthy pleasure. How should a pure doctrine dwell with those who breathe impurity of life and manners? Nothing, certainly, is more irreconcileable.

If, therefore, we would preserve a pure doctrine in the Church, we must be wholly changed in our minds, and have no part with the world, and with unchristian actions. We must "awake" * from the lethargy of sin, and shake off the works of darkness, that so Christ may enlighten us again with the light of a living faith. Whence it is plain, that whosoever does not follow the footsteps of Christ, nor imitate him in his love, humility, meekness, patience, and obedience, he must necessarily be deceived, and stray from the knowledge of God; since he does not walk in the way which leads to truth. On the contrary, if we but lived in Christ, if we walked in his love and humility, and directed all our endeavours and studies purely to this *one object*, that the flesh be mortified, and the life of Christ raised within us; that through him we might overcome ourselves, and triumph over the flesh, the world, and the devil; if this were but once effected, there would then remain very little contention and strife about church and doctrine, and heresies would of themselves fall to the ground.

We have an example of most strange delusion in Ahab, who, on account of his wicked and tyrannical life, was seduced by four hundred false prophets. † It was by their encouragement he undertook that fatal expedition against the Syrians, in contempt of the true prophet Micaiah, who

* Eph. v. 14. † 1 Kings, xxii.

positively foretold his death in that battle. But being led by a false light, he rejected the truth, and gave credit to lying prophets, who prophesied nothing but peace and prosperity to him. Hence the justice of God met him, according to the word of the true prophet, and by due desert the dogs licked his blood. In this is verified the word of St. Paul: "The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them." * And is not the same judgment threatened against all hypocrites, who boast of Christ and his doctrine, but deny him in their life and actions? For thus saith the Lord in the prophet: "Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me; therefore the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." † Concerning the prophets in particular, the Lord has plainly declared, that he has "covered the prophets, the rulers, and seers." Hence the vision shall become as a "sealed book," &c. ‡ And as for the Jews themselves, the Apostle has told us, that there is a "veil upon their heart," preventing their eyes from beholding the true Messiah. Which, however, shall be "taken away when they turn to the Lord." ‖

* 2 Cor. iv. 4. † Isaiah, xxix. 12. ‡ Verse 10.
‖ 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Of Purity of Doctrine, and concerning Controversies.

IT is highly necessary, that the purity of doctrine, and the truth of the Christian faith, should be maintained and defended. For this we have the example of the holy Prophets, who, with great zeal preached against false and idolatrous prophets under the old law; of the Son of God, who sharply disputed against the Pharisees and Scribes at Jerusalem; of St. John the Evangelist, who wrote his Gospel against Ebion and Cerinthus, and the Revelation, against the false church of the Nicolaitans and others; and of St. Paul, who vigorously defended the doctrine of justification by faith,* of good works,† of the resurrection of the dead,‡ of christian liberty,‖ &c. against certain false Apostles who had intruded into the Church. We have further the example of the holy Bishops and Fathers of the primitive church, who, following the example set them by the Apostles, strenuously opposed in their public writings the Pagan superstitions, and the heresies of those times. Nay, for the same purpose, Occumenical councils were gathered by Christian emperors, who condemned the chief heretics that infested the church at that time; such as the Arians, Macedonians, Nestorians, and Eutychians. Not to mention the example of

* Rom. iii. 22.
† 2 Cor. ix. 8.
‡ 1 Cor. xv.
‖ 1 Cor. ix. x.—Gal. v. 1.

Martin Luther, by whose polemical books and writings, the papacy, and other similar heresies, have in these latter days been greatly impugned. It remains, therefore, that preaching, writing, and disputation against heretics, may conduce to the preserving of the purity of doctrine, and the verity of the Christian religion. For this reason, the Apostle will also have "a bishop to be able both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." ‡

Though this in itself is both lawful and commendable, yet it has so fallen out by the strange *abuse* of it, that disputations and controversies, are increased to such an extent in these days, that the Christian life, true repentance, love, and godliness, and other heavenly virtues, are as it were abolished; as if the sum and substance of Christian religion consisted in arguing, and writing books of controversy, rather than in that unfeigned holiness of life, and purity of manners, which the Gospel requires.

Consider the examples of the holy Prophets and Apostles, as also of the Son of God himself. It is manifest they did not barely dispute against false prophets and apostles, and the superstitions maintained by them; but also with great zeal and vigour exhorted to true repentance, and a holy life. Their sermons were accompanied with power and energy; and they made it appear, that by wickedness and impenitence, true religion and worship were destroyed, the church laid waste, and kingdoms and countries visited with the plague, war, and famine. And all this exactly came to pass even as they said. Of this complexion is that declaration of the Prophet, where he denounces to the Jews, "that because the vine-

‡ Titus, i. 9.

yard of the Lord did not bring forth grapes, but wild grapes, the Lord had decreed to lay it waste."* Whence it plainly appears, that impiety is the cause, why God takes away his Word from us. And does not the Lord speak to the same effect, in the words recorded by St. John? "Walk whilst you have the light, lest darkness come upon you."† And what is it to walk in the light, but to imitate Christ in his life, and to have the same mind which was in him? And what does the Lord intimate by the "darkness coming upon us," but the loss of the Gospel, and of the purity of the Christian doctrine? All which may abundantly convince us, that without repentance and holiness of life, no soul can be illuminated with the saving light of the Gospel. For the Holy Ghost, who is the true enlightener of hearts, flees the ungodly, and chuses holy souls only, to make them friends of God. And if the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God, who can doubt, but that impiety and carnal security are the beginning of folly, ignorance and blindness?

The true knowledge of Christ, and profession of his doctrine, consist not in words only, but in deeds and a holy life. It is said of some verbal professors: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."‡ And again: "They have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof."‖ By this we are taught, that Christ and his Gospel are denied by a wicked life, as well as by words; and that he has not the true knowledge of Christ, who puts it not into practice. It is certain that a

* Isaiah, v. 4. 6.
† John, xii. 35.
‡ Titus, i. 16.
‖ 2 Tim. iii. 5.

man who never tasted in his heart the humility, meekness, patience, and love of Christ, cannot know Christ himself; and, consequently, in the time of trouble, cannot freely confess him. Whoever professes the doctrine of Christ, and rejects his life, is but a *professor;* and whoever preaches the doctrine of Christ without his life, preaches but *half a Christ*, and most shamefully perverts the order of salvation. The world abounds with books of controversy, written in defence of the *doctrine*, but very few living books are extant concerning repentance and a Christian *life*. Now what is doctrine without life, but a tree without fruit? Or how should he follow the doctrine of Christ, who refuses to follow him in his life? For the sum and substance of the doctrine of Jesus Christ is "charity, out of a pure heart, of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." But we live, alas! in an age, wherein there is so vast a number of disputants and reasoners in matters of doctrine, that one would think they had nothing more at heart than the promotion of religion and piety: whereas, alas! upon a closer search, they are found to be inwardly full of malice and pride, envy and avarice. For this reason the Apostle hath joined together *faith* and *love*, when he commands us to "hold fast the form of sound words."* *Life* and *doctrine* must go hand in hand together, and never be put asunder in the great work of salvation.

Though we do not in the slightest degree affirm, that by our own efforts and piety, eternal life is obtained; (for "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation:"†) yet it is certain, that by an antichristian life, the Spirit of

* 2 Tim. i. 13. † 1 Pet. i. 5.

God, with all his gifts, is banished; amongst which, faith, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, are not the least. Therefore it follows again, that without a holy life, purity of doctrine cannot be preserved; and that the wicked who will not follow Christ in his life, are not likely to be enlightened with the true light of the Gospel On the contrary, those that walk in the light, that is, who persevere in the blessed footsteps of Christ, are illuminated by the true light, which is Christ, and are hereby preserved from the danger of delusions and errors. To this effect, that holy and enlightened writer, Tauler, has said: "As soon as a man dedicates and yields himself up to God, and denies his own will and flesh, then immediately the good Spirit of God begins to illuminate him, and to endue him with solid and sound knowledge; because this man truly keeps in his heart the true spiritual Sabbath, and rests from all sinful lusts, and from his own will and works." This striking sentence is to be understood of the state *after conversion*, and of daily illumination and growth in divine gifts and graces.

Not without cause, then, doth the Lord say, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."* He calls himself the way, as shewing the way unto us. And how did he shew it? Truly, not in his doctrine only, but also in his most holy life. This life of our blessed Redeemer, consisted in a true and unfeigned devotedness to God, leading us the way to truth and to life, as the substance of our whole religion, and the summary of all the commandments of God. This book of life contains in it many great and arduous lessons, to learn which were sufficient to take up our whole time.

* John, xiv. 6.

Here is inculcated the exercise of true repentance, and of that living practical faith which attends it: here the practice of love, hope, meekness, patience, and humility, are to be studied; here the duty of prayer, and of the fear of God, is explained:—all which taken together, make up the whole life of Christ, set us as a pattern to follow. This is that "strait way," and that "narrow gate," which few can find. * This is the book of life, which rarely any read, though all things are comprised in it which a Christian ought to know and to practise; so that we shall need no other book in order to our eternal salvation. Here is the reason why also the Holy Scripture is contained in a few books, that it might appear, that Christianity does not consist in a multitude of volumes, but in a living faith, and in a serious imitation of Christ. For as the wise man says: "Of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh." Wherefore, let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; "Fear God, and keep his commandments." †

We are told in the parable, that the devil, when men are asleep, cometh and soweth tares among the wheat, and goes his way. ‡ This teaches us, that when men lay aside the works of repentance, and indulge themselves in the sleep of sin, of carnal security, of love of the world, and of temporal care and concerns; that then the devil gradually sprinkles his seed of false doctrine in the field of pride: ‖ whence arise various sects, schisms, and heresies. For by the sin of pride both angels and men lost the true light with which they were at first endued. Pride is the original principle of all delusions and errors, which thereby have been

* Matt. vii. 14. † Eccles. xii. 12, 13. ‡ Matt. xiii. 25.
‖ Gen. iii. 5.

most unhappily brought into the world. If the fallen Angels, and Adam, the first man, had continued in a state of humility, as did Christ when he conversed among men, then never had any error or seducing spirit infected this world. But now there is no other means for our recovery left, but that which is suggested by St. Paul: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light:"* convincing us thereby, that no man can be divinely enlightened, who has not before shaken off his sinful lethargy; that is, his carnal security, profaneness, and impiety. The same is attested by St. Peter: "Repent, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" † and by the Lord himself, in that saying: "The world cannot receive the Spirit of Truth, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." ‡ And what is the *world*, but a life passed without God?

Again, when the Lord says: "By their fruits ye shall know them;" ‖ does he not signify the fruits of a good and holy life, as the proper marks whereby true and false Christians may be discerned? A naked, empty profession of the Christian faith, will be no safe foundation upon which to rely. Any false Christian is apt to cover himself with the *sheep's clothing* of a verbal profession of the Christian faith; when inwardly and in his heart he is every thing but a true Christian. However, be the lives of the professors of Christianity ever so vain and wicked, it does not follow hence, that the whole doctrine is also false and corrupted, as some would insinuate, vainly condemning our doctrine on account of the wickedness of our lives. If this were true, the doctrine of Christ

* Eph. v. 14.
† Acts, ii. 38.
‡ John, xiv. 17.
‖ Matt. vii. 20.

and of his Apostles would hardly escape the stain of error and falsehood; because even in their days many impious characters intruded into the church, and made a fair profession of the Christian faith. A profane life is no sufficient proof of false doctrine in general, though it may give us an insight into the professor himself, whether he be a true or a false Christian. Truly, he cannot believe aright, who leads a life opposed to the nature and properties of a divine faith. Such a man is no more a believer, or a Christian, than a dead body is a man. As many, therefore, as are of the number of such corrupt and unfruitful trees, are fit for nothing but to be hewn down and thrown into the fire. *

In order to understand this the better, we ought to inquire into the nature of a sound and saving faith, and the peculiar properties that attend it. And in the first place, a true, saving faith, works by love: † By faith man is made "a new creature;" ‡ he is thereby born again, and united with God. By faith, "Christ dwells" and operates "in his heart." ‖ By faith the whole kingdom of God is established in the soul, and the divine Spirit "purifies and enlightens the heart." § And truly, the Scripture copiously sets forth these and similar properties that accompany true faith. Thus the Apostle says: "He that is joined to the Lord (by faith) is one spirit." ¶ And what is it to be one spirit with Christ, but to have the same mind, the same heart and will, which are in him? And this oneness of spirit, must needs suppose that new, holy, and heavenly life of Christ which is to be raised within us. To the same purpose

* Matt. vii. 19. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ Gal. vi. 15.
‖ Eph. iii. 17. § Acts, xv. 9. ¶ 1 Cor. vi. 17.

it is said: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" * where *to be in Christ*, is not only to believe in him, but also to live in him. Again, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; I will even betroth thee to me in faithfulness." † This striking sentence can signify no less, than that a man by faith is wholly and spiritually united to Christ; so that where faith is, there Christ is; where Christ is, there his life is also revived in man; where the life of Christ is, there also is his love; and where love is, there is God himself, who "is love." ‡ And, truly, from such a soul, the Holy Ghost, who is a "Spirit of love," ‖ cannot be absent. And in this divine order all these heavenly transactions most sweetly conspire; even as the head is one with the members, and as the cause is linked with the effect.

This connection of faith and life, St. Peter admirably enforces, when he bids us to "give all diligence, to add to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity:" "For if these things," says he, "be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." § Where the Apostle evidently declares, that in whomsoever this union of faith and of life is not to be found, he is destitute of all saving knowledge of Christ; he is fallen from faith, and walks in darkness. For it is the pro-

* 2 Cor. v. 17. † Hos. ii. 19, 20. ‡ 1 John iv. 8.
‖ 2 Tim. i. 7. § 2 Pet. i. 5—9.

perty of true faith to change a man wholly, to renew, and to quicken him in Christ; so that henceforth man may live and dwell in Christ, and Christ again may live and dwell in man.

CHAPTER XL.

Rules for leading a Holy Life.

"EXERCISE thyself unto godliness: For godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."* In this apostolical sentence is contained a brief description of a Christian's life, and of the main study about which he is employed. This is the study of godliness, or of Christian piety, which comprehends in it the whole train of virtues. The Apostle makes use of two motives to recommend this heavenly study, and the constant practice of it. *First*, says he, "Godliness is profitable unto all things." Godliness is of most admirable service, as soon as our words and actions are influenced by it. It renders the whole life acceptable to God, and useful to our neighbour. The second motive is, because godliness is accompanied with a gracious reward both in this life, as appears from the examples of Joseph, of Daniel, and of others: as well as in that which is to come; where we shall reap without ceasing, provided we do not faint while here. For our

* 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

better encouragement in the practice of piety, let us endeavour to keep in remembrance the following rules and considerations.

I.

If thou canst not live up to that degree of holiness which the word of God requires, and which thou thyself desirest, yet thou must never cease *ardently* to *wish* for it; for such holy breathings are always acceptable to God. God does not so much regard the outward action of a man, as the heart whence the action proceeds. But after all, never neglect to crucify thy flesh, and to retrench more and more the sinful dominion which it has usurped.

II.

In all thou thinkest and doest, be careful to preserve the *purity of thy heart*. Set a watch over it, lest thou be defiled with proud thoughts, words, or actions; with wrath, or other such works of the flesh, or of the devil. Sin opens the door to the devil, and shuts the heart against God.

III.

Study and strive to maintain the Christian liberty of thy soul, and do not suffer thyself to be enslaved, or brought into bondage, by any *inordinate love* of the creature, or of the things of this world, whose Lord and master thou oughtest to be. Consider the dignity of thy soul, which certainly is of more noble descent than this present perishing world. Why shouldest thou degrade it so far, as to subject it to the frail, base, and frivolous things of this life?

IV.

Beware of the care and *sorrow of this world*, be-

cause it worketh death. As worldly sorrow begetteth death, so godly sorrow begetteth life, and lays up immortal treasure! *Worldly* sorrow springs from avarice and envy; from excessive care; from unbelief and impatience; and other temporal views and considerations. *Godly* sorrow proceeds from meditation on thy sins, and those eternal punishments which accompany them. This sorrow produces many salutary effects in a penitent soul, and "worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of;" * being attended with spiritual joy, and solid peace or tranquillity of mind. No loss of a temporal kind ought to afflict thee so much as the remembrance of thy sins, by which thou hast offended the infinite goodness of God.

V.

If thou canst not bear thy cross with such joy and cheerfulness as many of the saints, and as indeed becomes a Christian, yet take it at least with patience and humility, and acquiesce calmly in the divine will and providence. For, truly, the will of God is always good; nor does it intend any thing but thy benefit and salvation. Whatsoever, therefore, God shall be pleased to appoint thee in his wisdom, do thou gratefully accept it, and be either joyful or sorrowful, poor or rich, high or low, vile or excellent, as he thinks fit. Let this always be in thy mind: 'Thus it seemeth good unto God, and so it must needs be expedient and useful for me also: His will, not mine, be done.' Let not that, therefore, which pleases God, displease thee; but rather rejoice that all things are ordered according to his pleasure and thy salvation, however thy own silly heart may

* 2 Cor. vii. 10.

suggest to the contrary. Remember "the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." * Hence it is but just that the will of God should be done, because it is always good and profitable; and that thy own will should be subdued and unaccomplished, because it is always evil and hurtful.

VI.

Whenever the Lord visits thy soul with heavenly joy, accept the same with gratitude and humility: and when he is pleased to withdraw the comfortable light of his presence, then consider, that the mortification of the flesh must needs be of greater profit to thee, than exalted joy in the Spirit. Through much spiritual joy, many fall into spiritual pride But whatever causes mortification and sorrow, is far more useful in subduing the flesh, than that which is delightful and pleasing to nature. The Lord best knows whom to lead in a pleasant and agreeable path, and who are to be brought through an unpleasant, stony, and difficult way. Always esteem it best to arrive at thy journey's end by that way which divine Wisdom has chosen for thee, however different it may be from thine own choice, or from the devices of thine own heart. Remember, that "sorrow is better than laughter;" and that by "sadness the heart is made better." And if thou wilt be wise, trust to the experience of the wise man, who tells thee, that "the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools in the house of mirth" †

VII.

Make an offering to God *of all thou hast, and undertakest.* If thou canst not bring offerings of

* Psalm, cxlv. 17. † Eccl. vii. 3, 4.

a high and exalted devotion, of prayer, of thanksgiving, and of other similar acts of religion, offer at least what thou hast, with a good will, and a fervent desire. *Wish* at least, that it may prove acceptable unto the Lord; for to have such a desire, or to be willing to have it, is no contemptible offering, but is very agreeable to the kindness of God. In what measure thou desirest to offer up thy devotion, thy prayer, and praise; in that measure God accepts the same. He requires no more at thy hands than he himself works in thee by his grace: nor canst thou return him more than he has first conferred on thee. In the mean time, entreat the Lord Jesus, that he would graciously please to supply what is defective in thee by his own most perfect oblation and sacrifice: because he, and he only, is the perfection of our imperfect worship and service. Say, therefore, in faith: "O my God, and my Father, I beseech thee, let my devotion, my prayer, and thanksgiving, together with all the acts of my faith and worship, be graciously accepted by thee in thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Esteem them, not according to what they are in themselves, but according to what they are made in the merit of the All-sufficient Sacrifice offered up by thy Son. O look upon that, and upon all that he has wrought for me in the flesh: and as his most perfect works must needs be pleasing to thee, so let mine also be acceptable to thee for his sake. He, O my God, shall abundantly make up whatsoever is defective in me. By this means, our devotion, our prayer, and thanksgiving, how imperfect, weak, and obscure soever they may be in themselves, acquire a certain lustre, worth, and dignity derived upon them, from the merit of Christ, whereby our works are rendered acceptable to the

Lord. As a poor, naked, and helpless infant, whilst it is in its blood, is a loathing to every one that sees it, but becomes sweet and lovely when it is thoroughly cleansed, and covered with fine linen; in like manner, all the works which thou dost in thy natural state, are polluted with sin, and of no account before God; but no sooner art thou covered with the perfection of Christ, than thy works appear with a more favourable aspect, and are no longer ranked with the defiled works of nature. As fruit, which is not valuable in itself, surprises the spectator into a love of it, when served up in vessels of precious gold: so our prayers and acts of devotion, though of no account in themselves, are exalted in Jesus Christ, in whom, as *in the beloved, we are made accepted* with God. *

VIII.

If thy sins and manifold frailties (as they should do,) make thee sad, yet let them not lead thee to despair. If they be many in number, think there is yet more mercy with Christ, and "plenteous redemption" with him. † If thy imperfections be ever so great, remember that Christ's merits are yet greater, and say with the royal penitent: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies!" ‡ And when by the grace of God, thou truly repentest, and beholdest Christ Jesus, that great sacrifice for sin, then God himself repents of the evil which was to be inflicted upon thee; and absolution and remission of sin instantly follow so good and salutary a sorrow. As the leper, upon his application to Christ, was immediately cured from his evil, so is also the penitent sinner. No sooner did he

* Eph. i. 6. † Psalm, cxxx. 7. ‡ Psalm, li. 1.

say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" but Christ freely replied: "I will; be thou clean."* So also the merciful God, inwardly and in the spirit, makes thee clean, and comforts thee with that healing expression: "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." † This wonderful mercy of the Lord in cleansing and absolving thee of thy sins, as it is forcibly represented by the example of that leper, so it ought by no means to give thee an occasion to sin the more; but to love God the more, and to say: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name." ‡

IX.

Let not injuries, reproaches, and revilings, provoke thee at any time to wrath, indignation, or revenge; but rather *take them as so many trials* of thy heart, and of the inward state of thy soul. Hereby God designs to *prove* thee, that it may appear what is hidden within thee, and whether meekness and humility, or wrath and pride, sway thy mind. For "that which lies concealed in a man, is stirred up and made manifest by reproaches and provocations." If, therefore, thy heart be endued with meekness and lowliness, thou wilt easily bear contempts and injuries; nay, accept them as so many paternal chastisements designed for the good of thy soul.

Moreover, thou must consider, that contempt and reproaches are part of the sufferings of Christ, to which every true member of his ought to conform. He ought patiently to bear whatever the Lord shall be pleased to allot him. "Let us go forth," says the Apostle, "unto him, bearing his

* Matt. viii. 2, 3. † Matt. ix. 2. ‡ Psalm, ciii. 1.

reproach."* Behold with what lowliness of heart did he undergo the affronts of a profane world! And should not we submit to the same with meekness, and with an unshaken evenness of mind? Say not then, "*Should I suffer these things from so contemptible a fellow as this*"? Yes, truly; in consideration of that patient and meek spirit which was in Christ, and displayed itself in his whole life and conduct. Lastly, consider the kindness of God towards those that suffer for his sake. So faithful is he, and so kind to those that bear any disgrace on his account, that he confers the greater marks of honour and favour upon them. Thus David, when Shimei vented his malice upon him, took it for a pledge that God would bestow a token of greater honour upon him. Which accordingly came to pass. "It may be," says he, "that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day, and turn his curse into a blessing."† Be not, therefore, at all disturbed at the evil report that wicked men may raise against thee; but rejoice rather, since the spirit of glory rests on those that are reproached for the name of Christ.‡

X.

Study to overcome and to pacify thine enemies in the most effectual manner. This is best done by bestowing upon them tokens of love and kindness. No man will ever be reconciled by wrath, or revenge, or returning evil for evil. For victory consists in virtue, not in vice. And as one devil does not drive out another, so it cannot be expected that one evil should be subdued by another; or that revenge should be extinguished by

* Heb. xiii. 13. † 2 Sam. xvi. 12. ‡ 1 Pet. iv. 14.

affronts and provocations. A man that is full of sores and bruises, is not likely to be healed by the addition of more blows: and if he be so mad as to beat and to cut himself, he is to be pitied, and to be treated with the greater kindness and lenity. In like manner, if a man be full of *spiritual* distemper, he is to be handled with the more love and gentleness; if, perhaps, by such lenient means as these, he may be softened into a better temper. This is the method which God himself uses for overcoming our natural obstinacy. Does he not conquer our malice with his goodness, and our wrath with his love? And does he not invite us to repentance by many endearing marks of love and benignity? This victory is recommended by St. Paul: "Be not," says he, "overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."* This is victory indeed.

XI.

When thou observest that God has adorned thy neighbour with gifts above thee, take heed not to envy him on that account; but rather rejoice and give thanks to God for the same. Consider, that since all true believers make up together but *one* body, it must needs follow, that the beauty of every member is communicated to the whole body, and to every member thereof. On the contrary, when thou perceivest any misery in thy neighbour, lament over it as if it were thine own; considering that the condition of all men is equally subject to evil, and that misery and affliction are entailed on mankind. Christ hath also set thee here an example. And, truly, whoever does not commiserate and sympathise with

* Rom. xii. 21.

the misery of his neighbour, let him pretend to what he may, he is no living member of the body of Christ. For did not Christ look upon our misery as his own, and by compassionating our deplorable state, deliver us from all our miseries? This mutual love and sympathy, are inculcated by St. Paul: "bear ye one another's burdens," says he, "and so fulfil the law of Christ." *

XII.

As for *love* and *hatred* in relation to thy neighbour, take the following directions. It is but fit thou shouldest hate his vices and crimes as the very works of the devil; but then beware of hating the person whilst thou abhorrest his sin. On the contrary, it is thy duty to bewail the hard lot of thy neighbour, who being carried away by so many irregular passions, enjoys no solid rest in his soul. Offer up his cause to God, and pray for him, as Christ did for his enemies, when he was nailed to the cross. Do not, therefore, hate any man, but his vices only; for whosoever hates a man, and seeks his ruin, can in no wise be pleasing to God; since it is the very nature of God to be kind, and to desire that "all men should be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth." † This was also the end for which Christ took our flesh upon him. He came into the world, "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." ‡

XIII.

Consider all men frail and imperfect, but none more frail and imperfect than thyself: for before God, all men stand equally guilty, and there is no difference. We have all sinned, and have there-

* Gal. vi. 2. † 1 Tim. ii. 4. ‡ Luke, ix. 56.

by been deprived of the image of God, and of all the glory which attended it. How great a sinner, therefore, thy neighbour may be, never fondly persuade thyself, that thou art better before God. Remember this warning of the Apostle: "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." * He that makes himself the lowest of all men, is in the fairest way of being preserved, by the grace of God, unto salvation. And certain it is, that thou standest no less in need of the grace and mercy of God, than the greatest of sinners. Where there is a great measure of humility, there is also a great measure of grace. Wherefore St. Paul accounted himself the "chief of sinners;" † and it was in this order he obtained mercy, and had so much long-suffering bestowed upon him. And in another place he declares, he will glory in nothing but in "his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him." ‡

XIV.

Consider that true illumination is always accompanied with a contempt of the things of the world. As the children of the world have their inheritance here upon earth; so the children of God have theirs laid up above in heaven. The treasures which the children of this world have chiefly at heart, are temporal honours, perishing riches, earthly splendour and beauty. But the treasures of the children of God, bequeathed them by their Redeemer for their lot in this world, are nothing but poverty and contempt, persecution and reproach, the cross and death, trouble and sorrow. Thus did Moses prefer the reproach of a despised Christ before the treasures of Egypt; and the

* 1 Cor. x. 12. † 1 Tim. i. 15. ‡ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

affliction of the people of God, before the pleasures of sin. *

XV.

Remember, that by the name of a Christian written in heaven, is intimated that solid practical knowledge of Christ which is grounded in faith, and by which we are transplanted into Christ. From this knowledge, flow all the living virtues which the Lord will praise in the great day of retribution. He will then also bring to light all those treasures which we have laid up in heaven, together with all such works as have been wrought in God. Never has a saint lived upon earth, but he has been particularly eminent in one virtue or other, and in that, excelled the rest of his brethren. And this virtue shall never be forgotten. Whether it be faith, love, mercy, patience, or any other virtue in the practice of which he has been so conspicuous, it shall make up that eternal name which is written in heaven. This will be the note and character of the saints, and their eternal memorial before God. But of this, more shall be said in Book II.

CHAPTER XLI.

The whole Duty of a Christian.

IN the *true knowledge of Christ*, wherein is comprehended that of his person, offices, benefits,

* Heb. xi. 25.

and heavenly gifts, consists *life everlasting*. This knowledge is kindled in our hearts by the Divine Spirit, and is a new light shining forth with increasing brightness, and passing on from glory to glory. It is like a metallic body, which, by constant polishing, becomes every day more brilliant; or a tender infant, which, by a daily supply of food, grows up in vigour and strength, and in the course of time, arrives at manly stature. No sooner is the righteousness of Christ, through faith, conferred upon a returning sinner, but he is also really born again, and the image of God is renewed within him. His spiritual growth, or the renovation of his mind, goes on, however, in a successive manner, from one degree to another, till he becomes a perfect man in Christ. * He is a child for some time; but is continually nourished by the Divine Spirit, and daily brought to a greater conformity with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The whole life of a Christian upon earth, is properly nothing else but a continual *renewing of the image of God* in his soul: so that he may constantly live in the new birth, and daily mortify that which is old and corrupt, till the body of sin be eventually destroyed. This life must be begun in this world, that so it may be perfected in that which is to come. It is certain, that in whomsoever the renewal of this divine life shall not be begun before his departure from this world, in him it *never* shall be accomplished.

Wherefore I have thought it might be well, briefly to repeat again what is here meant by the *image of God*, which is to be revived; and what by the *image of the devil*, which is to be defaced in man's soul: for in the right knowledge of these

* Eph. iv. 13.

two, the substance of our whole religion consists. It is the main point upon which all turns, and from which many other articles (as that of original sin, free-will, repentance conversion, faith, justification, prayer, the new birth, sanctification, and lastly, obedience, and the whole practice of a religious life,) borrow no small light. But of this, the following discourse will give a more instructive account.

The soul of man is an immortal spirit, endowed of God with excellent powers and faculties; as the understanding, will, memory, and other affections of the mind. See that thou turn all these towards thy God, in order to behold him therein as in a mirror or glass; and by beholding him, to have his image gradually formed in thy soul. In this sense the Apostle speaks of "the glory of the Lord," which we behold "with an open face," without veil and shadows.* He calls it also "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," † which shines forth in a soul purified from the dross of corruption, and renewed into the likeness of God.

As God is a truly good and holy Being; so also were the substance of the soul, and its true nature and essence originally good and holy. And as in God there is nothing of evil; even so was the soul of man, in the beginning, perfectly free from all manner of evil. As in God there is nothing but what is right; so in the soul there was nothing at first but what was right also. For he is the rock, whose "work is perfect;" even "a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he." ‡ As God is wise; so was also the human soul full of divine and spiritual knowledge, of heavenly

* 2 Cor. iii. 18. † 2 Cor. iv. 6. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 4.—Psal. xcii. 15.

and eternal wisdom. And as the divine wisdom ordered all things in number, weight, and measure, and knew the powers of all creatures, as well in heaven as in earth; so also was the mind of man enlightened with the same light and knowledge.

And as it was with the understanding, so it was with the will: for as the one was the image and reflection of the divine understanding, so was the other of the divine will, in every thing. It was holy as the pattern was holy, and exactly agreeable to the will of God. Hence as God himself is; so was the human soul; righteous, loving, merciful, long-suffering, patient, meek, gentle, true, and pure.* Yea, all the passions or affections, all the appetites, and motions of the heart, being made most perfectly conformable to the motions and affections of the divine mind, partook of this conformity of the will of man with that of God. As, therefore, God is LOVE, so all the affections and motions of man, in his first state, breathed nothing but pure love. As God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one in an unspeakable and eternal bond of love: so all the affections and desires of man, burned with a most perfect and flaming love, and he cleaved unto God fully with all the powers and faculties he had; "with ALL his heart, and with ALL his soul, and with ALL his might;"† so that man verily loved God more than himself, and preferred God and his honour to himself and his own.

But as the image of God shone forth in the *soul*, so the image of the soul again shone forth in and from the *body*. This, therefore, was holy, chaste, and pure throughout, not subject to any unclean motion or lust. It was undefiled and without

* Exod. xxxiv. 6.—Psalm, ciii. 8.—Joel. ii. 13. † Deut. vi. 5.

blemish. It was in every part beautiful, well proportioned, and graceful; of vigorous health, and possessed of a constitution even out of the very danger of sickness. It was such as death itself had no power over, and it was perfectly free from all weariness, pain, listlessness, passion, grief, and old age, now the common attendants and warnings of man's mortality. In a word, the whole man, both in soul and body, was pure, holy, righteous, and every way acceptable to God. For, that man might be the image of God, it was necessary that his body should be holy, and conformable to God, as well as his soul. Accordingly, St. Paul both exhorts and prays, that the *body*, together with the *spirit* and *soul*, be *sanctified wholly;* and be preserved holy and *blameless* unto the coming of our Lord.* For since man is made up of soul and body, and exercises both bodily and spiritual functions; there was a necessity that the instrument through which the soul was to act, should be pliable and obedient, adapted to the nature of the soul, and holy as the soul was holy; to the end that the holy and righteous soul, might finish her work through the body without any obstacle or resistance.

As, therefore, the soul burned with the *pure love* of God: so did all the powers of the body sweetly break forth and exert themselves in the love of God and man. As the soul was altogether merciful; so also the body was with its whole might, and all its faculties, sweetly impelled to tenderness and compassion. As chastity shone forth from the soul, which was made altogether divine and pure; so the whole body, in like manner, together with all the inward and outward

* 1 Thess. v. 23.

senses and powers thereof, visibly set forth the most perfect purity and chastity. To conclude, the perfections of all the virtues no less gloriously shine in the body, than in the soul itself; so that the body was the holy instrument of the soul, in every thing suited to it, and worked together with it. And hence it was easy for man in the *state of innocency*, to love God *with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength, and with all his mind, and to love his neighbour as himself:* which is the very substance both of the old and new law given to man.*

Hence, as often as God calls for the HEART of man, we are to understand the *whole man*, both as to body and soul, and the powers, faculties, and operations of both. In this sense the name of *heart* is frequently taken in Scripture; so that under it are comprehended all the powers of the soul, as the understanding, will, and memory; together with all the desires and affections attendant on them. So when God demands a man's *soul*, he, under that name, requires not a part, but the WHOLE of a man. He must, in all his powers, be conformed to God, and renewed in Christ Jesus: and thus, man having put off the old nature, and being renewed in the spirit of his mind, must also *walk* in newness of life, and in the spirit by which he was begotten again.

Moreover, there was a *perfect joy in God*, which accompanied this perfection of holiness, righteousness, and divine love, in man. By this, all the faculties and springs, both of soul and body, were most powerfully affected: for wherever the Divine holiness resides, there also the joy of the Spirit must be present. These two are knit together

* Deut. vi. 5. Matt. xxii. 37, 39. Luke, x. 27.

with an everlasting bond, and make up the very image of God. But, as in this life, the Divine righteousness and holiness are but imperfect in us, so we but taste, while here, the first fruits of that joy which shall be fully revealed hereafter. However, as the righteousness of Christ is verily *begun* in sincere believers, so it follows, that they also enjoy a *real* beginning and foretaste of divine joy and comfort; as those Christians can abundantly attest, that have learned religion by experience.* Whatever progress, therefore, any one makes in the love of God, be it more or less, so much of divine joy does he also perceive in his soul.

And this holy and divine love, as it shall in the next life attain its full perfection, so in that day the Christian's *joy* (arising from love) shall also be *full*, as the Lord himself declares.† For divine love is the only true life, and the only true joy: but where this love of God is wanting, there is neither joy nor life; but death itself, and the everlasting portion of wicked men and devils.

Whence has a father joy? Is it not from the love of his children? Whence has a bridegroom joy? Is it not from the love of the bride?‡ But infinitely sweeter must that joy be, which is derived from the love of our Creator! He not only embraces us as a father does his children, but he rejoices over us as over his bride; nay, most tenderly kisses us "with the kisses of his mouth,"‖ (that is, in Christ, who is his mouth and word,) and coming to us, through Christ with the Holy Ghost, makes his *abode* with us.§ O how short will be the joy of a father, or a bridegroom, in comparison of this!

* John, xvi. 22. 2 Cor. i. 5. Phil. iv. 4. † John, xv. 11.
‡ Isaiah, lxi. 10. ‖ Cant. i. 2. § John, xiv. 23.

Take heed, however, concerning this image of God, which consists in a conformity with God; that you do not therefore think, as if man were made *equal* with God in holiness. No, by no means. For God is infinite as to his essence, virtues, and properties; he is incomprehensible, and without bounds; so that nothing in the world can be compared with him. Man therefore, even in his first state, could not properly be said to bear God in him; being designed only to bear his *image*. But of this, more has been said in Chapter I. of this Book; to which the Reader is referred.

That which has been stated concerning this image of God, is certain and beyond all doubt. It cannot be denied, that God created man, to be a bright mirror of his Godhead and Majesty: so that if man had been desirous to know the nature of God, he might, by looking into himself, have beheld God there, as in a glass, and clearly perceived the expressed image of the Deity within his own breast.

This image was the life and blessedness of man; but the devil looking with envious eyes upon this image of God in man, exerted all his art and cunning to efface it, by raising in man a spirit of disobedience and enmity against God. This he accordingly effected with a subtility and depth of intrigue, that never were used before. He was not ignorant, that if man had continued in that state, he would have been lord of the devil: but that if he could be induced to fall from it, that the devil would thereby become the lord (or rather the tyrant) of fallen man.

When, therefore, with all the powers of his exquisite malice and policy, he could devise nothing more likely to accomplish his design than

that by which he himself lost his first state or principality; he began with words dropping sweet as honey, to insinuate into the *imagination* of the woman, no less than an *affectation of the Divine Majesty.** What can appear more divine, or what is there more noble to be wished for, than to "be as God?" By this cunningly contrived method, man being therefore circumvented, he lost the divine image at once; and was immediately cloathed with the abominable image of Satan; consisting in an "affectation of the Divine Majesty."

This aspiring thought, by which man threw off all his dependance on God, being thus begotten in the mind; and this haughty arrogance having once seized the imagination, there followed immediately APOSTASY from God, disobedience, and transgression of the commandment concerning the forbidden tree. Hereupon the image of God was extinguished, the Holy Spirit fled from man, and the evil spirit imprinted his image instead of that which was effaced. Hence now so many men, so many slaves of the devil. They bear his mark and image; and therefore they are his.

The devil having thus gained his object in subjecting man to his dominion, most cruelly insulted over him; just as a giant may be supposed to do over a little infant. Hence the understanding in man is darkened and blinded; the will is by a most provoking disobedience distorted and turned from God; and all the springs and powers of the heart are so stirred up against God, that being intoxicated with devilish malice, they in a most shameless manner set themselves against the Almighty. In a word, the whole image of God

* Genesis, iii. 5.

lieth now *slain* in man, and the whole race of mankind being swayed by the satanical nature, have a seed sown in them full of the deepest malignity. Hence men became the offspring of Satan, and the devil's living likeness, being poisoned with all manner of sin and enmity against God. *Thus died man! Thus died he the death everlasting*! For as the image of God is the life and salvation of man; so the departure of this image is the death of man, even death eternal, and his damnation, which is also called a death "in trespasses and sins." *

They best understand this death, who, having been cast into deep spiritual temptations, sensibly feel the devil's rage and tyranny over them. By this he torments the soul beyond what it is in the ordinary power of sin to effect. Now, unless the Holy Ghost shine in upon the soul under this terrible affliction, and by darting in some ray of his light occasionally comfort it; the devil slays the man with this death, and racks the soul with the very torments and anguish of hell itself. Hence all the natural force of the body sinks, the strength fails, the heart withers and pants, and the very marrow in the bones consumes away, so that there is no soundness left in the body. This state is described at large, Psalms, vi. and xxxviii. The word of God itself, to such a one seems dead and lifeless: he finds in it no manner of devotion, no savour of spiritual life. This is the spiritual death, into which the soul is fallen: and while the soul remains thus spiritually dead, all human holiness, righteousness, excellency, might, power, glory, honour, arts, and wisdom, can avail nothing. And, truly, man would

* Eph. ii. 1. Col. ii. 13.

undoubtedly perish in this grievous condition, if he were not supported by divine grace: for nothing but this is able to succour him.

Hence learn therefore, O man, duly to look into, and rightly to consider the abominable filthiness of *original sin*, as the sink of all abomination, and the most dreadful of all dreadful things. For by this the hereditary righteousness of God was lost, and the hereditary unrighteousness of the devil transplanted into men. Hence the sinner was cast away from God, and consequently doomed to an infernal death: and this, without doubt, he must certainly undergo, except he obtain forgiveness of sin for Christ's sake through faith. But to set the state of fallen man, both as to soul and body, in as clear a light as possibly I can, I thought it well to give a fuller description thereof in this place; most earnestly entreating the reader, for the sake of God and of his own eternal salvation, to ponder again and again, and seriously to revolve in his mind that original crookedness, that inborn depravity which has corrupted our nature. The consequence of this will be, that as a man beholds his bodily face in a glass, and knows it, so he may also behold in himself his own natural wretchedness, with all the malignity that enters with him into the world. This will daily influence him to lament his own distressed condition, and to sigh after Him, who alone is able to heal us.

The whole Christian religion is indeed nothing else, but a constant wrestling of the spirit in us with original sin, and a continual purging away of the same by the aid of the Holy Ghost, and by true repentance. For, truly, in proportion as any one mortifies his natural propensity to evil, in that degree is he renewed after the image of God,

even day by day. They who are not inwardly mortified by the Holy Ghost, are at best no more than hypocrites, let them make ever so great a shew with an external profession of the Christian faith. Neither can they expect to enter into the kingdom of God, since they are not renewed into his image: for whatsoever is not dead to itself, nor renewed into the image of God by his spirit, is altogether unfit for that glorious state.

From all this, there may evidently be inferred the absolute necessity of the new birth, and of the daily renovation of our mind into the image of God. This necessity will yet more fully appear, when we consider the image of the devil, as it is stamped upon the soul, and all the woeful effects that attend it. But then it must be impartially looked into, according as the law describes it. For as the devil not only does not *love* God, but *hates* him with his whole heart; so he has infected man's soul with the same contagion, and transfused into it a malice against God; so that now man by nature neither loves, honours, believes, calls upon, nor trusts in God; but as he is filled with enmity against him, so he flees from him, and shuns him as his very enemy.* As the devil is hurried on with a blind fury of mind, and lives without God and his will; so in like manner, the soul of man being corrupted by him, leads a *godless* life, unmindful of God and of his will. This inward darkness of the mind, is attended with a dismal destruction of the divine light and image; and brings forth that abominable sin, in which man, left to himself, saith: "there is no God."† And by reason of this blindness of heart, all mankind are become an abomination before God, and are accursed in all their ways.

* Gen. iii. 8. † Psalm, xiv. 1.

But notwithstanding so dreadful a night of apostasy, there still remained some sparks of light in man's understanding, by which he might come to know that there was a God; as also, that this God must be just, according as all the Heathen philosophers unanimously teach: but as for the spiritual life, which is after God and his righteousness, it was wholly extinguished in man. For conscience, which is the law of God written in every man's heart when it was first formed by him, teaches every one what is good and agreeable to God. Thus if you look for instance, upon a person that is unchaste, there is not one that so much wallows in the filth of the flesh, but he now and then thinks with himself, "surely there is a God, and this God has no such manners as I have, but is most pure and undefiled; and so not like to me by any means." He cannot but reflect further, "this holy and pure God, must abhor every sort of pollution and uncleanness; and, therefore, if I would be acceptable to him, I ought to live chastely, and to abstain from all impurity." But this spark of light is soon put out by the filthy lusts of the flesh which crowd in upon the mind; and overwhelm all good impressions, just as a spark of fire is swallowed up by a flood of water. The lust of the flesh is kept within the heart, and the conviction, which began to reprove it, is soon stifled.

From this it plainly appears, that the spiritual life, consisting in holy love and truth, is in the carnal or natural man utterly abolished. And thus the wiser sort of Heathens, however they might sometimes by the light of nature maintain both the being of a God, and his providence over human affairs, were soon carried away with

the darkness of their own hearts, and again called in question that providence which they had before asserted: so that very little is to be made of what they say on this head. This their books sufficiently declare.

From this hereditary blindness of heart, and this natural inbred darkness, spring unbelief and uncertainty of mind. And because all men are by nature born in this degenerate state, they are an abomination in the sight of God; since there is no faith in them, nor any filial reliance upon the paternal goodness of God. To this spiritual life, and to the various operations that proceed from it, the natural man is an utter stranger; consequently he does not call upon God, but trusts to his own wisdom, power, and strength. This certainly is the greatest blindness and darkness of mind possible.

From this blindness of heart, further arise a contempt of God, and a state of carnal security. As the devil does not humble himself before God, but is hardened in pride; so has he infected the soul of man with the same vice, and poisoned it with contempt of God, security, and insolence. Hence he, like his father the devil, will not humble himself before God; but is stout and insolent, haughty and self-willed, and would do every thing after his own will, without the least fear of the Lord to keep him in awe. As the devil relies on his own strength and wisdom, and thereby entirely governs himself; so fallen man, being infected with the contagion of Satan, acts in conformity with him; and will always be his own counsellor and master. He thinks himself too good to be advised or ruled by another. Moreover, as the devil seeks his own honour, so does the natural man, who bears his image. He is in pursuit of

self-honour, without any regard to his Maker, whose honour he was designed to promote.

As the devil blasphemes the name of God, and is extremely ungrateful to his Creator; so it is with man, transformed into his image. As the devil is unmereiful, wrathful, and revengeful, so is the soul of man, which he has soured with the same leaven of malice. As the devil delights to *lord* it over men, and to please himself with vain glory, so man, tainted with the same tyrannical ambition, haughtily lifts himself up above others. He laughs at his neighbour, and shuns his company, as if he were a worthless, pitiful person, and too great a sinner to be conversed with.

But, O man! thou art to consider over and over again, that in these, and all other cases, the method of God is not to charge or accuse the outward members of a man, but the *heart* only. The heart is the murderer and the liar, not the hand nor the mouth. It is the soul that is guilty; and which is therefore every where arraigned in Scripture. So when God commands men to call upon him in the time of trouble, * he gives this command to the soul, not to the lips. And it is the very same in every other case. Whosoever does not observe this necessary rule in reading the Scriptures, is certainly blind indeed. He can never have a right apprehension of original corruption, repentance, or regeneration; nay, he cannot attain to a sound knowledge of any one article of the Christian religion.

We have daily before our eyes the extreme wickedness of men, their horrid pride, savage hatred, barbarous enviousness, and other impious qualities with which they tear one another, after

* Psalm, l. 15.

the manner of wild beasts. Many are transported to such a degree of malice, as to be unconcerned about their own lives, provided they can but hurt or destroy another. Their neighbour must submit to their pleasure, or expect to perish from off the earth, and to have a snare laid for his ruin. Thus, as the devil himself is a "murderer from the beginning;* so he stirs up the soul of man to thirst after the blood of others. For all these inhuman qualities of the heart, this envy and wrath, this bitterness of mind, this rancour and malice, what are they but the seed of the devil sown in man, and his express image engraven upon the soul? Alas! how the devil has pourtrayed himself in man!

God had implanted in man a conjugal affection, that was pure and honourable; that thence children might be begotten after the divine image. Nor could there certainly have been either a pleasure more holy, or a love more heavenly, than that by which man, in this blessed estate, would have thus propagated the image of God and mankind at the same time. All would have been for the glory of his Creator, and the salvation of man. Nay, if man in the state of innocency could have brought forth an infinite number of children, and thus an infinite number of times propagated the honour and image of God; nothing, certainly, could have been more grateful to him than this; nothing more delightful, more full of holy joy and satisfaction. For these acts would then have proceeded from pure love to God and to men, as so many images of the supreme good. As God did, by and from the creation of man feel a holy pleasure; and delighted in him, as in his image: so

* John, viii. 44.

also man would in like manner have been sensible of a most pure and exquisite joy in the procreation of his like, and in the propagation of God's image.

But, alas! at this day, Satan has polluted this chaste flame of conjugal love with all uncleanness. Men and women, actuated with a blind transport of lust, beget children *in their own*, not God's likeness. * How is the holy bond of matrimony trampled upon and profaned! How wholly defiled is it with spots of the flesh, and what a multitude of vices and impurities now shelter themselves under the sacred name of matrimony!

As God is just, the devil is unjust. The devil is therefore a thief, a plunderer; and being so in himself, has instilled into man's soul the same unjust disposition, the same ravenous nature. The devil is a false accuser, † a fallacious reasoner, ‡ and a treacherous informer, ‖ as well as a scornful mocker of God and man. § He misrepresents both words and actions, and wrests them to a wrong sense. Of this artful contrivance he gave a striking instance when he beguiled our first parents by his surprising craft and subtility. ¶ Thus the soul of man, corrupted by Satan, has received from him, as by inheritance, a perverse and lying nature. **

This corruption is the devil entirely. It is the poison of his seed, wherever it is found; the contagion of which cannot be expressed in words. This devilish corruption conveyed into the soul is so horrible, and so manifold, as to render it altogether impossible to declare at large the subtile

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* Gen. v. 3. † Rev. xii. 10. ‡ 2 Cor. xi. 3.
‖ Job, i. 9, 10. § Job, ii. 3, 4, 5. ¶ Gen. iii. 5, 7.
** John, viii. 44. Psalm, lxxii. 9, 10.

contrivances, and the different kinds of diabolical wit and cunning that proceed from it. * Read Psalm, v. 9. Rom. iii. 13. and James, iii. 5, 6; and thou shalt find described therein in the most lively terms, that world of wickedness, which by a deceitful tongue is drawn forth from the diabolical venom that lurks within, and that thence spreads itself through the whole man. For God, as was hinted before, does not blame the tongue, or the hands; but in his law, charges the fault upon the whole man, yea, upon the heart, as the chief cause of all the evils committed. This ought to be particularly observed in the whole course of a religious life.

And this is that image of the devil, which now, instead of the image of God, is so deeply engraven on the soul. Hereby man is made to delight in sinning, and particularly in slandering another, even as the devil's name imports. How many, alas! are there, that reckon themselves very good Christians, and yet will not hesitate to lessen their neighbour upon any occasion that offers; and after they have discharged their venom against him, will greatly applaud themselves for what they have done. Such a man will say: "This is just what I have sought for a long while; I am now eased of a great burden; I seem to be alive again, as I have so finely treated such a one —— I think I have been now too keen for him." Ah! poor man, thou art to be pitied! How great is thy blindness, thou foolish wretch, that thou dost not discern who it is that has transformed thee into so spiteful a devil and slanderer; and whose image it is thou carriest about thee! Seest thou not that this is the very nature of the devil, the unhappy

* Eph. vi. 11.

seed of Satan! discernest thou not this to be his true temper, which he has implanted in the soul of man, that it might there display itself, in all sorts of vices, but more particularly in pride, covetousness, lust, and slander; even as daily experience abundantly witnesses? Alas, is this thy wit and cunning?

Behold, O man! yea, behold the foul, the horrible, the profound corruption of original sin! O how filthy, how unsearchable is it! Consider this again and again; and descending into thy self, learn there to know the image and nature of Satan, which, like a gangrene, is spread through thy whole soul, together with all the dangerous symptoms that attend it. And learn how thy soul is hence become an abomination before God, and is laid waste in so dreadful a manner, that no creature is able thoroughly to search out the malignity of the heart of man. Neither art thou thyself able sufficiently to explore it, or to explain in words, that detestable venom which is as rottenness in thy innermost parts.

Wherefore, I earnestly beseech and intreat every one that reads this, that he ponder with himself, and seriously reflect on those things that have been said concerning the *depravity and corruption of man's heart;* even as if they had been inculcated a thousand and thousand times, over and over again. For so great is this virulence, so malignant and pestilential, as to put it beyond the power of any creature, either angel or man, ever to root it out, or to cleanse or free our nature from it. All the powers of men come short of so great a performance. For how should any one be able to work out his salvation with his own natural powers, since they all without exception are most radically corrupted, utterly depraved, and even quite dead to spiritual things?

Man, therefore, must be for ever miserable, and eternally lost in these pollutions, unless there come to his help one that is able to succour, and to apply a healing medicine to so dreadful a disease. This must be a lord over sin and death, able to subdue so obstinate an evil, and by his divine virtue, to renew, transform, and purify again the defiled nature of man.

All this is a convincing proof, that *justification* cannot be the work of man, but of God only: and likewise that *regeneration*, or the being born again by the Spirit, is indispensably needful to the restoring of fallen nature. For in conformity to the inward principle of corruption, there is now a sort of necessity that the soul should live a perverse and impious life. Man does not now hesitate openly to transgress all the commandments of God, more especially those of the first table; since the enmity he bears against God, is made more manifest by this transgression. The understanding and will are now so dead, and so much enslaved by sin, that according to their natural bent, they are incapable of any love, fear, or reverence for God. They cannot call upon him, honour him, praise, or worship him: they cannot put the least trust in him, or turn themselves towards him.

Many of the Heathens have, indeed, been illustrious for their good and virtuous deeds, and gained no small credit by their morality. But it is utterly impossible for nature to *change the heart*, to turn it to God, and to cleanse it from those sinful affections that lurk within. This work is to be accomplished only by a *divine* power. For notwithstanding all this glittering shew of morality which some make, there still remains the inward root of the tree of evil, whose fibres stick

so fast in the soul, that no human power can ever destroy them. The utmost that a man can do in so sad a case, is to prevent the fire from breaking out into flames. so as to consume all that comes near it; but notwithstanding this damp which is cast upon it, the evil fire still keeps in, and secretly burns as much as ever

Were not human life, and the management of civil and social affairs under some check, the whole race of mankind would be destroyed at once, and rooted up from off the face of the earth. For though the devil has exercised an exceedingly great cruelty over man, yet God has not suffered him to pluck up all the *natural powers* and affections from man's soul. There still remain the law of nature, and the natural love subsisting betwixt husband and wife. parents and children. Without this it would have been impossible for mankind to have long subsisted upon earth.

Whosoever, therefore, will still fulfil what the unbridled lust and desires of his corrupt nature may hurry him to, such a one must be looked upon as the very bane of all society. He entirely ruins, as much as in him lies, all commerce and dealings betwixt men. It is, therefore, an effect both of God's mercy and wisdom, that he has preserved in fallen man this little flame of natural love: the design of which is, that by the sense of this love, we might know in some degree the excellency of that spiritual and divine love which we have lost by the fall of man; and that from feeling the one, we might be brought to consider the worth of the other, and to breathe after the recovery of the same.

But as to *spiritual* matters, and such things as more immediately concern the happiness of the

soul, and the kingdom of God, nothing certainly can be more true than that saying of the Apostle, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." * That is, man in his natural state has not so much as one spark of spiritual and divine light; but is wholly blind in the things that appertain to the heavenly life, and which constitute the image of God in the new creature. Man, nevertheless, was created for this only end, that by means of this spiritual light, he might, with the inward eye of the soul, contemplate the gracious presence of God, and his sincere love towards him; and continually walking with and before the Lord, absolutely depend upon Him, and submit himself to be governed by His will and pleasure.

The natural man not having so much as one spark left of this spiritual light, it cannot but be that all men must abide in their natural blindness, unless they be rescued by a high hand, and enlightened by God himself. This is that hereditary spiritual blindness, which utterly incapacitates us for the knowledge of such concerns as relate to the kingdom of God. But if it happen, as too often it does, that a man besides this, indulge himself in all profane and dissolute practices; then that *spiritual blindness* is followed still by another, even *natural* blindness, which produces abundance of awful effects in the fallen soul. For by so prevailing a wickedness, that weak glimmering light which yet sparkles in man, and would reason him into *outward honesty* of life, is at last totally extinguished; and the soul is abandoned to the

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

vilest and blackest enormities possible. It is then struck with an abominable blindness and darkness of heart, and must for ever continue so, unless Christ restore the light.

What art thou, then, O man, by nature, unless Christ by his Spirit regenerate thee, make thee a new creature, and transform thee into the image of God? This new creation, necessary as it is, is, however, but begun in this life, and must struggle under the weight of many infirmities, till it be fully established in the mind. If thou dost but look into thyself, even after thou art become a new creature through the Holy Ghost, it will plainly appear, that the image of God is but slightly delineated, and, as it were, shadowed out in thee. Dost thou not see, that faith, hope, charity, and the fear of the Lord, are as yet but weak, and hardly able to advance beyond the first principles of the Christian life? Dost thou not see how slender humility is, and how deeply the sin of distrust, pride, and impatience, is rooted in thy breast? Dost thou not find thy devotion weak and languid; and thy charity towards thy neighbour comparatively cold?

How tender a spark of pure chastity remains in the heart; and how vast a fire of carnal pleasure burns within! How faint the one, how violent the other! How great still are thy self-love, self-honour, and interest, sins that lurk within, and do not always outwardly appear! And how fierce is the tide of evil concupiscence which flows in upon thee, and disturbs thy inward repose! Whence it follows, that to the very last moment of our lives, we must, by the Spirit of God, continually wrestle with the old Adam, and with the image of the devil within us. This is to actuate us incessantly to pray, sigh, and seek, till the Divine Spirit be

bestowed upon us, in order to abolish the image of Satan daily, and to retrieve the image of God again in our souls.

From all this, thou canst easily understand, O man! that thou art never to rely on thine own strength; but entirely to cleave to the grace of God, which alone is able to work all this in thy soul. All things are to be sought and obtained from and by Christ through faith. From Him thou art to receive divine knowledge and wisdom, against thy own blindness and folly; a perfect righteousness, against all thy unrighteousness; his holiness against all thy impurity; a full redemption, power, and victory, against death, hell, and the devil. From Christ thou must obtain remission of all thy sins, against the kingdom of sin and Satan, and against all the combined powers thereof; and, lastly, everlasting happiness, against all spiritual and bodily adversities and troubles. In this *order* alone, life eternal is to be derived from Christ. But of this, more shall be said in the Second Book of this volume.

CHAPTER XLII.

The Conclusion.

BEFORE I close the *First Book*, I think it necessary, for the benefit of the reader, to add a few general observations upon the whole.

And first in this Book, the nature of true repentance, and the fruits depending on it, have been explained at large in various ways, which several

reasons have rendered necessary. Most of the Chapters in this Book, accordingly, treat upon the fruits of true repentance; such as our renovation in Christ, the daily mortification of the flesh, the practice of self-denial, contempt of the world, the exercise of charity, &c. These, as the *rudiments* of *True Christianity*, of a holy life, and of salvation itself, are here proposed with all possible plainness, for the benefit of the inexperienced. Without this *preparatory* work, no solid comfort can ever be tasted in the heart of man. He must be thoroughly acquainted with the nature of original sin, that dreadful, mortal, and diabolical evil, which, like an internal poison has spread itself through the whole man, (ah, it is impossible sufficiently to describe and deplore it!) and proved the seed of a multitude of fatal and pernicious fruits. All the books of comfort, and all the promises with which the Gospel abounds, afford no substantial consolation to a man, except he be thoroughly humbled by a previous sense of his misery, and of that deadly corruption which has infected his heart. Man, in this fallen state, is too apt to flatter himself, and to look for the sweets of comfort, before a thorough search has been made into his own sinful condition, degeneracy, and apostasy from God. Nature is concerned for comfort more than a cure.

But this is very preposterous, and altogether against the tenour of Scripture, and the method of salvation therein explained. Our Lord says, "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."* No cure can be expected, no medicine can be prescribed, no comfort can be applied, nor can Christ himself, the great Physician of souls,

* Matt. ix. 12.

be of any use at all, so long as a man, thinking himself well, is not sensible of those deep distempers that rage in his soul. And whereas the disease that afflicts us, is the flesh, corrupted wholly, there is a necessity that it should be subdued and mortified. Hence a true Christian's life consists in a *daily crucifixion* of the flesh, and of all the sinful propensities grafted upon it. O that every one might lay this earnestly to heart! No man can belong to Christ, or have a share in his merits, but he that regulates his life according to this rule. But such a soul shall not be left *comfortless* in the end; but after grief is over, shall be refreshed with the cordial of divine consolation. No sooner is a soul thoroughly humbled by a lively sense of inbred corruption, and the infectious influence it hath on all the actions; but it is raised again by those suitable grounds of comfort which the Gospel prescribes. In all this, the operation of the Divine Spirit, and man's meditation on the word of promise, sweetly concur, and bring over the soul to Christ, who is both willing and able to heal her, and to turn her mourning into permanent gladness.

But whoever will enter upon this course of true and sincere repentance, must be careful not to be shaken by the foolish judgment which this impious world will be apt to pass upon the whole design of *True Christianity*. Let the profane worldling think ever so much of his own natural parts and wisdom, it is certain he is altogether blind in the things of the Spirit of God, and the most ignorant wretch possible. And though he may exercise his reasoning faculty on things that are far above his reach and capacity, yet while he has no knowledge of the wretchedness of his own nature, and of those spiritual diseases that spring from it, he

continues an utter stranger to spiritual concerns. He does not understand what Adam and Christ are, or how Adam is to die, and Christ to live in us again. And as he disdains to learn what he knows not, it is certain he must for ever remain in darkness and ignorance. Nor will he ever be able in that state to obtain any insight into the grounds and properties of true repentance, faith in Christ, the new birth, and other points, wherein true Christianity consists, and whereby he might be rescued from everlasting ruin.

The *second* thing which I would mention at the close of this Book, and which thou art carefully to avoid, is the sin of *spiritual pride*, after God has begun to implant in thee, by his grace, spiritual gifts, new virtues, new habits of mind, and a new substantial knowledge.

See that thou ascribe none of these attainments to thy own power, wisdom, or industry.

Carefully avoid taking up thy rest in those virtues and good dispositions that are formed within thee; and never confide in them as *means* of thy justification before God. For as they are yet stained with various defects and imperfections, so they can never pass for the perfect righteousness of God, without which there is no acceptance.

Never seek thy own honour and glory by the gifts God has been pleased to bestow upon thee. On the contrary, use them with humility and fear, divesting thyself of all selfish designs, and returning all thou hast unto Him, who is the true disposer and author thereof. Do not let the tempter deceive thee at any time, by placing thee on the pinnacle of these and similar persuasions: "I have now a strong faith, fervent charity, much knowledge, many gifts;" for these suggestions are the *tares*, which the enemy of thy soul sows among

the wheat while thou sleepest. But to guard thyself the better against these and the like temptations, often reflect upon the following considerations:

1. None of these gifts are thine, but God's only, without whose illumination and all-quickening power, thou art but a lifeless lump of clay. These gifts are no more thine, than the light and heat of the sun are the earth's, which is warmed and penetrated by them.* Thou art, at the best, but the casket to hold the jewels: and the glory of these no more belongs to thee, than the lustre of a precious stone belongs to the box in which it is kept. So when God places in thee his jewels, as in a repository, thou shinest then indeed with the lustre thereof, and art made "all glorious within:" † but when he takes away his gifts; or when, by any fault of thine, thou art left without them, then art thou truly dark and void, the treasure is gone, and thou art but an empty casket. Is it not, therefore, a great folly to boast of the goods of another, which are laid up in thee?

2. Thou art to consider, that as the lord of a treasure, may lodge his treasure wherever he pleases, and remove it as he thinks fit; so God, in like manner, may deposit his heavenly treasure in thee, and take it away again, as he sees convenient. Him, therefore, thou oughtest to fear with holy reverence, and at the same time carefully beware of spiritual pride and presumption: for this would issue in the inevitable loss of the celestial jewel committed to thy trust.

3. Thou art to consider, that the righteous God, at the great audit, will call thee to an exact account of all he has entrusted to thy care. The

* 2 Cor. iv. 7. † Psalm, xlv. 13.

more thou hast received, the more will he require at thy hands.

4. In the midst of all thy gifts, do not think thou hast received all that the Lord has in store for his children. Ah! beloved Christian! be thy attainments ever so high and excellent, they are hardly the first lineaments of that image of God, into which we shall be hereafter transformed. There is still a great deal wanting of its full accomplishment.

5. Seriously consider, that no good and perfect gifts are obtained or preserved but by *prayer:* for every good and perfect gift descendeth from God. * Whatever thou seemest to possess without this, is but a lifeless shadow, a seed bearing no fruit, but withering away. But for this particular, I refer the reader to my book of prayers, entitled *The Garden of Paradise*, wherein by examples is shewn, that without prayer, no heavenly gift can descend into the heart of man. And that the reader may have some feeling of this, he is desired to peruse what is said on this subject in an appropriate treatise inserted in the *Second* Book of this Work.

There are two things which thou must chiefly regard in thy prayers and application to the Lord: *first*, That the *Image of Satan be destroyed in thee;* as unbelief, pride, covetousness, lust, wrath, &c. *secondly*, That the *Image of God be restored in thee;* in which are contained faith, love, hope, humility, patience, meekness, and the fear of the Lord. These two, that is, the destruction of the *diabolical*, and the restoration of the *divine* image, are briefly contained in the Lord's prayer. This prayer makes both *against* thee, and *for*

* James, i. 17.

thee. If the name of God alone is to be hallowed, then thy name must be debased and thy haughtiness pulled down. If the kingdom of God shall come, then certainly the devil's kingdom must be overthrown in thee. If thou desirest that the will of God should be done; then truly thine own must be renounced and undone.

These are the two parts into which any useful prayer-book or method of prayer may be fitly digested; an order which is clearly exhibited in the prayer of our Lord, so far as it respects those heavenly and eternal benefits and gifts which we are directed to seek. Nay, in the Lord's-prayer, all the treasures both for soul and body, and all the things we want both for this life and that which is to come, are summed up. And there is no question, but that the Father in heaven, according to the bowels of his paternal compassion, will readily grant, what the Son of his love has so strongly commanded us to ask.

A PRAYER

FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

ALMIGHTY God and merciful Father, I beseech thee to enlighten the eyes of my mind with thy heavenly light, that I may thoroughly look into my deplorable fall in Adam, and see how far I am departed thereby from thee, the fountain of light, and am involved in sin, the cause of all darkness and misery. Thy divine Word, O Lord, plainly declares, that my *understanding* is darkened, and destitute of the light of life; that my *reason* is rebellious, and disobedient to the dictates of thy word; that my *will* is opposite to thy will, and utterly impatient of thy discipline. It pronounces that the *mind* of man, in this present fallen state, is vanity; his *conversation* folly; his *heart* hardened; his *life* alienated from the life of God; his *conscience* oppressed with the load of sin; his inward *eye* closed against the influx of thy light; his *ear* stopped to the sweet whispers of thy voice; his *throat* an open sepulchre; his *tongue* used for deceit, and prone to treachery; his *lips* infected with the poison of asps; and his *mouth* full of cursing and bitterness.

Moreover, thou hast manifested by the word of thy law, that not only my passions and inclinations are carried away by the love of the world, and have gone astray from the way of peace: but that also my very body, and all my members, have been reduced under the bondage of sin, so as to yield themselves servants to iniquity unto iniquity. Wasting and destruction is in my paths. My hands are feeble to do good; while my feet run to evil, and make haste to commit folly.

Ah Lord God! how inexhaustible is the abyss of my misery! and how unsearchable the depth of the corruptions of my heart! Wherefore grant,

O most gracious God, that I may not only read this woeful description of fallen nature, as it is delivered in thy word; but that I may also lift up my voice, out of the depth of my misery, and appeal unto the depth of thy mercy. Grant that I may humbly prostrate myself at the throne of thy grace, in order to receive that purifying and restoring virtue, which is to be derived from Christ, the great repairer of our nature;—that so the malignant seed of sin being mortified in me, and the wholesome seed of the Word of Truth springing up again, I may chase the power of darkness out of my will, and illuminate my understanding with a divine knowledge.

After my soul is thus begotten into a spiritual life, my *reason* will cheerfully rest in the obedience of *faith*, and serve the spirit without reluctance. My restless and refractory *will* shall cease, and sweetly repose in the Divine will. My *mind* and *conversation*, having shaken off the yoke of vanity, will cleave to the true simplicity that is in Christ, and seek those things that are above. My *hard heart* will be softened, my *life* reformed, and rendered conformable to the life of God. My *conscience*, having thrown off the dominion of unrighteousness, will, under the influence of Divine grace, sway all the faculties of my soul. The inward *eye* being opened in me, shall then freely admit the light of thy truth; and all my affections being born again, shall receive instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold.

Grant me thy help, O Lord, that I may not only put off the gross and visible pollutions of the flesh, but that by frequent acts of humiliation, I may both know and conquer the very root whence all this evil proceeds. And as it is nothing but self-love that produces so vast a multitude of

vices; grant, that laying the axe of mortification to this evil root, I may so effectually vanquish the same, that the Gospel of Christ, being the power of God unto salvation, may gain ground in my soul, and spread itself through all the faculties thereof. But as I am so blind, that without thy light I am not able to know my own darkness; and as I am seized with so deep a distemper of mind, that I am hardly sensible of the disease I lie under; so, I beseech thee, good Lord, to remove from me all such impediments as in any wise obstruct the saving knowledge of myself, or stifle those fervent desires with which I am to embrace Jesus Christ, that great sacrifice for my sin.

After the dispensation of thy law, (whereby is the knowledge of sin,) has made me heavy laden, then let the dispensation of the Gospel that giveth life, sustain me with the plentiful emanations of thy love and mercy, to the utter destruction of the kingdom of darkness within me, and the establishment of the kingdom of light in all the powers and faculties of my soul! These mercies I earnestly ask through thine only beloved Son Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy person, and in whom, as in the Son of thy love, thou hast made me acceptable unto thyself. Amen.

ASPIRATIONS.

1. GRANT me, good Lord, a deep insight into the corruption of fallen nature, that I may the more plentifully taste the grace revealed in Christ for my restoration.

2. Teach me, O Lord, to know myself; O make

me understand both what Adam and Christ are; and how the first must die, that the second may live in me.

3. Lord, I am taught by thine Apostle, that the "natural man understandeth not spiritual things." Create, therefore, in me, by thy Spirit, a spiritual eye and heart, that I may duly discern, and freely embrace the things which are from above, and which tend to the spiritual health of my soul.

4. Grant me, O Lord, a right knowledge of my depraved and lost state, and a right use of such means as thou has provided for my recovery.

5. Suffer me not, O Lord, to walk any longer in the darkness of my perverse understanding; but deliver me from all blindess and hardness of heart, and from those carnal weapons which my corrupt reason is apt to lift up against the operations of thy Spirit. O enlighten my eyes, good Lord; that I may know the things which make for my peace, and freely comply with the terms of salvation that are offered in thy Word.

6. O Lord Jesus! when shall I taste of the plentiful emanations of thy love? When shall I be entirely freed from earthly incumbrances, that I may drink of the pure river of thy pleasure?

7. O infinite Love, make speed to help me! O hasten to assist me, that by losing my own life, I may find thine again!

8. O Lord, extinguish all false images, delusions, and errors, that have overspread the faculties of my soul. Write on my mind a sound knowledge of *sin* and *grace*, of *Adam* and *Christ*, of the *fall* and *recovery*.

THE

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND BOOK.

AS in nature the destruction of one thing terminates in the production of another; even so is it in a true Christian life. The old, carnal man must be destroyed and pass away, that so the new spiritual man may be produced in his place. And as our carnal life is directly contrary to the holy life of Christ; (which in the preceding Book is sufficiently declared;) it is absolutely needful, that we renounce this carnal life, before we can attain the spiritual life of Christ, or follow him in those steps he has been pleased to leave us.

Thus, for instance, thou must certainly put an end to thy pride, before thou canst be truly humble; thou must cease from wrath, before thou canst possess the virtue of meekness. And this is the reason, why the spiritual Christian's life ought to proceed from true *repentance*, and be begotten in the mind by the mortification of its opposite principle. This is also the design and substance of the preceding Book, as plainly appears both from the order in which the Chapters are arranged, and from the *Conclusion* appended to the whole Book.

Since, however, there will be occasion to treat upon the doctrine of repentance in some Chapters even of this Second Book, I shall now give some account of the whole *method* into which this Book is digested. As the main design of the *First* Book was to lay open the nature of ORIGINAL CORRUPTION, and the contagious influence it has upon all our actions; so it is but fit that the Second Book should begin with JESUS CHRIST, that everlasting well-spring of man's salvation, in whom alone we find help and cure against the destructive poison of original sin, and against that

flood of calamities and miseries which thence proceeds. All this on man's side, is effected by FAITH, apprehending that salvation which is merited by Christ. This matter is explained in the first three Chapters of this Book.

As, however, that *faith* which leads the soul to this fountain, and draws thence effects so excellent and good, also brings forth living and sound *fruits;* the next three Chapters are spent in describing the same more at large. Again, as the fruits of righteousness and of the Spirit, are to grow up in us and wax strong, so must the fruits of the flesh, in proportion, decay and decrease. And this is the *gradual* renovation of our mind, the daily, effectual, and unfeigned repentance, wherein a Christian ought constantly to be employed, if ever the flesh be mortified, and the spirit restored to its life and dominion. It was, therefore, judged expedient, to give here a clear description of the *difference* betwixt the *flesh* and the *spirit,* and of the properties of a *daily repentance.* Upon this, the VIIth, VIIIth, IXth, and Xth Chapters entirely turn.

Further, it is from this habitual repentance, and the mortification of the *old* man, (the life of a true Christian being nothing else but a constant crucifixion of the flesh;) that the *new* man is daily supported; it is impossible to find a more perfect pattern, than that which our Lord Christ himself has left us. And for this reason, the life of Christ ought to be a mirror unto us, in which to view ourselves and him; and by beholding him, to embrace the more freely his poverty and reproach, his contempt and sorrow, his cross and passion, his agony and death. And this holy life of Christ is the death of the flesh, and accompanied with the exercise of prayer, love, and humility. This is set forth at large in the following fifteen Chapters.

Thus are the humility and lowliness of Christ a true ladder of ascension for a penitent soul; by means of which we ascend into the heart of God, as of a loving father, and calmly repose in his paternal affection. It is the *humanity* of Christ with which we begin our spiritual life, and rising up higher and higher, arrive at last at his *divine* nature. It is then we contemplate in Christ the heart of our Father in heaven. It is then we behold him as the sublimest, the everlasting, essential, and infinite good; we behold him, as the immeasurable omnipotence, as the unfathomable mercy, the unsearchable wisdom, the purest holiness, the unspotted and endless righteousness, the sweetest goodness, the noblest beauty, the most lovely graciousness, and the most gracious loveliness, and at last as the most joyful salvation. These points, as they chiefly make up Christian contemplation, so they are explained in the following eight Chapters. But because no one can ever arrive at this state of *contemplation* without prayer, hence the ensuing ten Chapters treat upon the nature of *prayer*, and the exercise of divine *praise*. And since this life, grounded on maxims of sound and unfeigned religion, will soon be attended with *crosses* and *tribulations*, it was but fit that in the remaining thirteen Chapters something should be said of the *cross* of Christians, and of the virtue of *patience*, the practice of which is thereby exceedingly promoted. To all this something is added of the nature and conquest of those deep *spiritual temptations*, with which Satan harrasses those that adhere to the Lord, and who endeavour to be faithful to the end.

God grant that we may be all true followers of Christ, not ashamed of his holy life; but following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, be led at last to the living fountains of waters, where the Lord will wipe away all tears from our eyes! Amen.

TRUE CHRISTIANITY.

Book II.

CHAPTER I.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is given us by our heavenly Father as an antidote against the damnable and mortal poison of original sin, and the pernicious fruits thereof, as well as a medicine against all the calamities and evils both of body and soul.

AS our distemper is exceedingly great, mortal, damnable, and out of the power of any creature to remove; so it is needful that we should have a remedy *proportioned* to the disease; a high, a divine, an everlasting medicine, entirely derived from the pure mercy of God. As our original disease was caused by the furious wrath, hatred, and envy of the devil;* so God, in tender compassion, was moved to heal the mortal wound of our sin by his infinite mercy. And because Satan had used his utmost endeavours and subtilty, in order to infect, slay, and condemn us, God was pleased in his infinite wisdom to redeem us through his beloved Son; and to restore us to

* Gen. iii. 1.

that life and happiness which we had lost. Hence he has made the precious blood of Christ to be the grand restorative of our nature, and the cleanser from all the contagion of sin. He hath given us his quickening flesh, to be our bread of life; his holy wounds, as a sovereign balsam to heal our wounded condition; and his precious death, to be an abolition of our death, both temporal and eternal.*

But so disabled, so weak, and undone, is fallen man, that he cannot so much as apply this precious medicine even when it is freely offered: so little health, and so much weakness is there in him. Nay, what is worse than all, we even, by nature, strive against our cure, and reject the remedy which should help us.—'Wherefore unless thou "draw me after thee,"† and, as a faithful physician, administer to me what thou hast ordered, the best prescriptions will avail me nothing; the disease will grow worse, and all will be lost upon me. Take me, therefore, entirely into thine own hands, and trust me not to myself. If I be left to myself, nothing is more certain than the eternal ruin of my soul. Therefore "turn thou me, and I shall be turned: heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; for thou art my praise."‡ As long as thou keepest back thy mercy, and hidest thy face from my sorrow, I shall remain in a diseased condition. Whilst thou forbearest to quicken me, I am tied down by the chains of death, and continue a captive to the powers of darkness. Therefore I cry with David, "I am poor and needy, make haste

* 1 John, i. 7. Acts xx. 28. John, vi. 39. Isa. liii. 5. xxv. 8.
† Cant. i. 4.
‡ Jer. xxxi. 18—xvii. 14.

unto me, O God. Thou art my help, and my deliverer, O Lord, make no tarrying."*

'Ah dear Lord! shall not thy mercy be strong enough to raise a sick soul from her languishing illness? a soul that is not able to raise herself? Wilt thou not condescend to come to me, since it is not possible that I should come to thee? It is certain that thou hast loved me, even before I had so much as a thought of loving thee again! Thy mercy is so prevailing and so strong, that it has even overcome thyself. Was it not mercy that nailed thee to the cross, and sunk thee down into the very jaws of death? Who is so strong as to encounter and conquer thee, if it be not the strength of thy own mercy? Who has might sufficient to apprehend thee, and to bind and hale thee to death, but thy love only, wherewith thou hast loved and quickened us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins?† For thou wouldst thyself undergo the pangs of death, rather than suffer us to be for ever bound over to death and damnation! Thy mercy, O Lord, has made thee all our own, and put a title to all thy merits into our hands. When thou becamest a tender infant, it was wholly for our sakes, unto whom thou art "born a child."‡ When thou wast made an offering for our sins, and when thou wast slain as an innocent lamb on the cross, it was to give up thyself unto us, and freely to impart unto us all things beside. O excellent gift of God! a good wholly appropriated to others, even our own peculiar good and treasure!

Behold, beloved Christian, the wisdom of God! God has by means of this everlasting good made himself our own property, that we again, by a

* Psal. lxx. 5. † Eph. ii. 1. ‡ Isa. ix. 6.

reciprocal act of surrender, may be made a property of his. For having purchased us "with a price," we are no longer our own, but his who hath bought us.* And whosoever receives so excellent a gift, receives also the Giver himself, from whom it proceeds. And again, whosoever possesses any good as his own, he makes it his own to all intents and purposes, and to the best advantage he can. Thus, likewise, is CHRIST become thy own and proper GOOD. Thou canst apply him in such a manner, as to obtain by him everlasting life and salvation.

CHRIST is become the true Medicine of thy soul, to restore thee.
Thy Meat and thy Drink, to refresh thee.
Thy Fountain of Life, to quench thy thirst.
Thy Light, in darkness.
Thy Joy, in sadness.
Thine Advocate, against thy accusers.
Wisdom, against thy folly.
Righteousness, against thy sin.
Sanctification, against thy unworthiness.
Redemption, against thy bondage.
The Mercy-seat, against the judgment-seat.
The Throne of Grace, against thy condemnation.
Thy Absolution, against thy fearful sentence.
Thy Peace and Rest, against an evil conscience.
Thy Victory, against all thine enemies.
Thy Champion, against all thy persecutors.
The Bridegroom of thy Soul, against all rivals.
Thy Mediator, against the wrath of God.
Thy Propitiation, against all thy trespasses.
Thy Strength, against thy weakness.
Thy Way, against thy wandering.

* 1 Cor. vi. 20.

Thy Truth, against lying and vanity.
Thy Life, against death.

He is,

Thy Counsel, when thou hast none to advise thee.
Thy Power, in the midst of thine infirmities.
Thy Everlasting Father, when thou art forsaken and fatherless.
Thy Prince of Peace, against the adversary.
Thy Ransom, against thy debt.
Thy Crown of Glory, against thy reproach.
Thy Teacher, against thy ignorance.
Thy Judge, against thy oppressor.
Thy King, to destroy the kingdom of Satan.
Thine Everlasting High Priest, to intercede for thee.

Consider now, O Christian, what an excellent gift the Lord CHRIST is. Let it be thy daily prayer and supplication to make a true saving use of all those heavenly *benefits*, and to improve all the *offices* of Christ to the end for which they are designed. If he be thy Medicine,* fear not but thou shalt be healed: since he is thy Bread,† thy soul shall be filled. Is he to thee a Fountain of Life;‡ then truly thou shalt thirst no more. Is he to thee a Light,‖ then thou shalt remain no longer in darkness. Is he thy Joy,§ what then shall afflict thee? Is he the Advocate¶ that pleads thy cause, what adversary shall cast thee? Is he thy Truth, who shall deceive thee? Is he thy Way, who shall make thee to err? Is he thy Life,** who shall slay thee? Is he thy Wisdom, who shall seduce thee? Is he thy

* Matt. ix. 12. † John, vi. 51. ‡ Isai. xii. 3.
‖ John, viii. 12. § Luke, ii. 10. ¶ 1 John, ii. 1.
** John, xiv. 6.

Righteousness, who shall condemn thee? Is he thy Sanctification, who shall reject thee? Is he thy Redemption, who shall imprison thee?* Is he thy Peace,* who can disturb thee? Is he thy Mercy-Seat,† who can arraign thee? Is he thy Throne of Grace,‡ who can give sentence against thee? Is he thy Discharge and Absolution,‖ who then dares impeach thee? Is he the Champion and the Captain of thy Salvation,§ who shall be able to stand against thee? Is he thy Bridegroom,¶ who then shall snatch thee from him? Is he thy Ransom,** who will arrest thee?

Is he thy Crown of Glory,†† who then shall reproach thee? Is he thy Master,‡‡ and Teacher, who then shall correct thee? If he be thy Judge,‖‖ who shall oppress thee? If he be thy Propitiation,§§ who shall accuse thee? If he be thy Mediator,¶¶ who shall set God against thee? If he be thy Advocate*** who shall prosecute thee? Is he thy Immanuel,††† (God with thee) who shall be against thee? Is he thy King,‡‡‡ who shall expel thee out of his kingdom? Is he thy High-Priest,‖‖‖ who can refuse his intercession and sacrifice? Is he thy Saviour,§§§ who shall make thee unhappy? If he save, who shall damn?—How canst thou have a more excellent, a more valuable present? It is a present of greater worth than thou thyself, than all mankind, and all the world besides. It is a present that infinitely surpasses all the sins, miseries, and calamities of the whole world. Christ

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* 1 Cor. i. 30.

* Eph. ii. 14. † Rom. iii. 25. ‡ Heb. iv. 16.
‖ Colos. ii. 14. § Heb. ii. 10. ¶ John, iii. 29.
** 1 Tim. ii. 6. †† Heb. ii. 7. ‡‡ John, xiii. 13.
‖‖ 2 Thess. i. 9. §§ 1 John, ii. 2. ¶¶ 1 Tim. ii. 5.
*** 1 John, ii. 1. ††† Isai. vii. 14. ‡‡‡ John, xii. 15.
‖‖‖ Heb. vii. 25. §§§ Matt. i. 21.

hereby is all our own, both as to his divine and human nature. It was by sin we had forfeited the richest of all treasures, the sovereign good, even God himself: and it is by Christ, that all is made up again, and God himself surrendered to us as our property. And for this reason, Christ is called Immanuel,* that in him we might have both a God and a Brother.

Consider now, O Christian! what an immense, what an infinite good thou hast in Christ thy Redeemer, and to what spiritual benefits thou art entitled by him. If people were but better acquainted with the sources of this heavenly comfort, no cross, no affliction, would seem any longer insupportable to them; because Christ would be all in all, and by his presence alleviate the miseries of this life. Christ himself is ours not only as a crucified Christ, but even as he is glorified, together with all the majesty that resides in him. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's."†

Alas! poor, miserable, reprobate, accursed, and damned sinners, as we by nature all are! How came we to be favoured and honoured with so high and inestimable a present! with so noble and transcendent a gift! For thou, O Lord Jesus, art to us—

Jehovah our Righteousness.
A Mediator between God and man.
Our everlasting Priest.
The Christ of God.
A Lamb without spot.
Our propitiatory Oblation.

* Isai. vii. 14. † 1 Cor. iii. 21.

The Completion of the Law.
The Desire of the Patriarchs.
The Inspirer of the Prophets.
The Master of the Apostles.
The Doctor of the Evangelists.
The Light of the Confessors.
The Crown of the Martyrs.
The Praise of all the Saints.
The Resurrection of the Dead.
The First-born from the Dead.
The Glory of the Blessed.
The Consolation of the Mourners.
The Righteousness of Sinners.
The Hope of the Afflicted.
The Refuge of the Miserable.
The Entertainer of Strangers.
The Fellow-Traveller of Pilgrims.
The Way of them that were mistaken.
The Help to them who were forsaken.
The Strength of the Weak.
The Health of the Sick.
The Protector of the Simple.
The Fortitude of Governors.
The Reward of the Just.
The Flaming Fire of Charity.
The Author of Faith.
The Anchor of Hope.
The Flower of Humility.
The Rose of Meekness.
The Root of all the Virtues.
The Exemplar of Patience.
The Enkindler of Devotion.
The Incense of Prayer.
The Tree of Health.
The Fountain of Blessedness.
The Bread of Life.
The Head of the Church.

The Bridegroom of the Soul.
The Precious Pearl.
The Rock of Salvation.
The Living Stone.
The Heir of all Things.
The Redemption of the World.
The Triumphant Conqueror of Hell.
The Prince of Peace.
The mighty Lion of Judah.
The Father of the World to come.
The Guide to our Heavenly Country.
The Sun of Righteousness.
The Morning Star.
The inextinguishable Light of the Celestial Jerusalem.
The Brightness of the everlasting Glory.
The unspotted Mirror.
The Splendor of the divine Majesty.
The Image of the Paternal Goodness.
The Treasure of Wisdom.
The Abyss of Eternity.
The Beginning without Beginning.
The Word containing all Things.
The Life quickening all Things.
The Light enlightening all Things.
The Truth judging all Things.
The Counsel moderating all Things.
The Rule directing all Things.
The Love sustaining all Things.
The whole Comprehension of all that is Good.

This is the great and infinite gift, which God has so freely bestowed upon mortal men.

CHAP. II.

In what manner the Christian is to apply to himself the Consolation noticed in Chap. I.

"THE Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost:" Luke xix. 10.—The *first* and chief foundation, by which the *universality* of the remission of sin, and of the merit of Christ is supported, is the *universal* extent of the divine *promises;* of which that abovementioned is not the least considerable. For if it be certain, that Christ came "to save those that are lost and damned;" who can possibly doubt, but that he will also seek and save thee, if thou art of the number of the lost and damned. It is also said, that God "commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness."* This argument is full of consolation. As if the Apostle had said, Christ will judge the world; and *therefore* God commandeth *all* to repent, that all may escape the dreadful sentence of eternal damnation. This is confirmed by St. Peter, who tells us, that God "is not willing any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."† All which passages plainly assert the universal grace of God, extending itself to *all* men.

The *second* foundation is the divine *oath*. In order that no room be left to doubts and scruples in this grand article, God has confirmed the

* Acts, xvii. 30. † 2 Pet. iii. 9.

universal promise of grace with an *oath*. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live: none of the sins that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him."* As if he had said—How can I delight in the death of a sinner, who am Life itself? Let but the wicked be converted, and he shall certainly live. Behold! God desires sinners to be converted! And dost thou doubt, that thou, who art a sinner, art by God solicited to conversion? When the Apostle explains this oath, he says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."† But if Christ came into the world with an intent to save sinners, thou art undoubtedly one of the number of those whom he came to save.

In order to show that the Lord will not retain so much as the remembrance of sin, he hath no less than three times engaged his word. First, by the prophet Isaiah, "I, even I," says he, "am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins."‡ Secondly, by Jeremiah he hath thus expressed his mind—"This shall be the covenant: I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."‖ And thirdly, by the prophet Ezekiel, "If the wicked," says he, "will turn from all his sins that he hath committed,—he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him."§ This is the divine act of oblivion,

* Ezek. xxxiii. 1, 11, & 16. † 1 Tim. i. 15.
‡ Isai. xliii. 25. ‖ Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. § Ezek. xviii. 21.

solemnly declared in favour of all returning sinners and penitent rebels, without exception.

The cause or reason why God promises not to remember sin any more, is no other than the sufficient satisfaction and reconciliation wrought by Christ. For whatever is entirely paid, yea, over and above paid, should be altogether buried in an everlasting oblivion. Now God being once perfectly reconciled and pacified by the most holy and most complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ, he can no longer be angry, nor perpetuate the remembrance of our transgressions.

The same oath is repeated again in the prophet Isaiah, "Look unto me," says the Lord, "and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: I have sworn by myself; the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return."* Which oath, the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares in this manner—"Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast."† That is, God, by his counsel, or promise, confirmed with an oath, hath more than sufficiently sealed and established his gracious will; that so none might be discouraged.

The *third* foundation is the eternal covenant of grace, which consists in the pardon of sin: "This shall be the covenant: I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

* Isai. xlv. 22, 23. † Heb. vi. 17, 18, 19.

And this covenant or testament, because confirmed by the death of Christ, is therefore everlasting and endless. To the same purpose the Lord says by the prophet: "Neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee."* And again, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David:"† (i. e. Christ.) And Moses declares the same: "The Lord thy God is a merciful God: he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them."‡ And likewise David: "He will ever be mindful of his covenant."‖ On which eternal covenant, that we might the more firmly rely, he hath renewed and established it with every one by baptism, which therefore is called "The answer or covenant of a good conscience towards God."§ For the same end, Christ himself was baptized in Jordan, and thereby entered with us into this covenant.¶

The *fourth* foundation is the death of Christ, by which the testament of God was ratified. But if any ask, For whom did he die? The Apostle answers, that "he died for ALL."** And another Apostle says, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world."†† So John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."‡‡ This, the Apostle explains in the following comfortable manner: "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon ALL men unto justification of life:"‖‖ where a comparison

* Isai. liv. 10. † Isai. lv. 3. ‡ Deut. iv. 31.
‖ Psal. cxi. 5. § 1 Pet. iii. 21. ¶ Matt. iii. 13.
** 2 Cor. v. 15. †† 1 John, ii. 2. ‡‡ John, iii. 29.
‖‖ Rom. v. 18.

is made betwixt Christ and Adam. As if he had said, 'Since the offence of Adam hath been so strong, as to make all men sinners; shall not the righteousness of Christ be far more powerful to make them righteous? if sin hath abounded, shall not grace much more abound?' The same Apostle having occasion to shew that the merit of Christ is universal, and extends itself to all, thus reasons: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." But if this be true, it also follows, "That God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." * To the same purpose it is said, that God by "Christ hath reconciled all things to himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." † And again: "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us ALL." ‡ In which number, reckon also thyself, because "God is no respecter of persons." ‖ Since, therefore, Christ died for sinners, thou, who acknowledgest thyself to be one, must necessarily have an interest in his death, and in all the benefits purchased by it.

The *fifth* foundation, is the universal call, grounded upon the universal merit of Christ. The latter was exhibited for the sins of the whole world, and it was proper that it should be preached to all creatures. § Now since Christ declares: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," ¶ it follows, that thou also, because a sinner, art called. But called to what? to repentance. And why? that thou mayest obtain remission of sin, through faith. "It behoved," says the Lord, "that repentance and remission of

* 1 Tim. ii. 5. † Col. i. 20. ‡ Rom. viii. 32.
‖ Acts, x. 34. § Matt. ix. 13. ¶ Mark, xvi. 15.

sins should be preached in the name of Christ among all nations." * And the Apostle affirms, that "The gospel was preached to every creature which is under heaven." † But to what end was it preached? surely for no other end than that thereby faith might be kindled and established among men, according to that saying of the same Apostle: "How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?" ‡ Whenever, therefore, God calls us to repentance, far be it from us to think that God calls us in vain, or without a real design to save us. Surely God is no hypocrite; but in this serious affair he seriously calls upon us, that we may embrace his mercy, and accept the offer of grace. Hence he is also angry with those who make light of his supper, and disdain to come to his feast. ‖ Whereas, for the sake of those who obey his call, through faith, he hath given his word, a word of promise, full of heavenly comfort, that "Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." ¶ Nay, he hath graciously promised to preserve the same faith unto the end, even till the salvation of the soul, which is the end of faith, be secured. * *

The *sixth* foundation is the inward testimony of the divine spirit, groaning after righteousness, and sealing us unto the day of redemption. This spirit incessantly rouzes and awakens the conscience. It reproves without intermission, convinces of sins, and sets them before thine eyes. It summons thee to repentance, calls thee

* Luke, xxiv. 46, 47. † Col. i. 23. ‡ Rom. x. 14.
‖ Matt. xxii. 7. § John, iii. 16. ¶ Phil. i. 6.—1 Pet. i. 9.

inwardly in thy heart, strives with thee, and leaves nothing untried, in order to bring thee over to an unfeigned conversion.* All these things are sometimes so sensibly perceived, that thou canst not conceal them, though ever so desirous to do it. This witness of Christ in thee, is never silent: and though thou shouldst stop thine ears against him, yet shalt thou be compelled to hear him *inwardly*. And if thou shouldst prove refractory to his summons, and deaf to all his invitations, yet must thou endure the smart of them, and feel the internal energy of his correction. Upon the whole, this internal testimony is a convincing, strong, and unquestionable proof, that "God would have thee to be saved."

The *seventh* foundation is raised on the examples of sinners, whom God upon their conversion hath received into favour. Surely "there is none righteous," of himself, "no not one."† Not only David, Manasseh, Peter, Paul, Mary Magdalene, and Zaccheus; but "ALL of us are sinners, and come short of the glory of God."‡ There is none innocent in his sight. Whatever favour God shews to one, the same he offers to all the rest; since he "is no respecter of persons."‖ We all are saved by grace, without any merit of our own, and all stand in need of a gracious pardon of sin: for, "if thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"§ and if thou enterest into judgment, "In thy sight shall no man living be justified."¶

The *eighth* foundation is, that the merit of Christ is not only sufficient, but even more than sufficient for the sins of all men, how numerous,

* John, xvi. 8—Gen. vi. 3. † Rom. iii. 10. ‡ Ver. 23.
‖ Psal. cxxx. 3. § Psal. cxliii. 2.

great and heinous soever they may be. What folly and ignorance were it then in any man to except himself from the number of those that are to be saved, and not to lay claim to that price, which is not only equal to, but also infinitely greater than the sins of the whole world? For as thou art of the race of men, so thou art intitled to that word of the Lord, "The son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them:"* And to that of St. Paul, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself:"† And again, to that of St. John, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world;"‡ that is, for all the sins of every man in particular.

A ninth foundation is, because the merit of Christ is an *infinite* satisfaction, beyond all number, measure, and end; and it is so on account of the person that suffered, who is both God and man. Why dost thou then presume to determine the extent, number, measure, and bounds of merit so ample, and to exclude thyself from it? So great, so high and so extensive are the power and efficacy of that merit, that it would still prove a sufficient ransom if every man were guilty of the sins of the whole world. Nay, if there were as many worlds drowned in sin, as there are men that live on this earth, yet would the merit of Christ and his righteousness be large enough to cover all their sins. Cast not therefore away a mercy so universal, so full and every way abounding. This surely is that "depth of the sea, into which God hath cast all our sins."§ Hence that of the Psalmist; "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his

* Luke ix. 56. † 2 Cor. v. 19.
‡ Joh. ii. 2. § Mic. vii. 19.

mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."* This is that "eternal redemption which is obtained for us."† The benefit of this complete redemption, is summed up by St. Paul: "It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth! It is Christ that died."‡

The tenth foundation is that the obedience of Christ is perfect: because he fulfilled the will and law of his father in all things, thereby to give satisfaction for all the disobedience which all the men in the world had committed against it. But if the sin and transgression of any one man were not expiated by him, then surely, his obedience would not prove perfect, and the disobedience of Adam had been more effectual to condemnation, than the obedience of Christ to justification. This cannot be, since the apostle in plain terms affirms the contrary.§ What reason is there then, that any one should exclude himself from this perfect obedience, or be backward to assert his own interest in it? Let us rather persuade ourselves, that Christ for this very end humbled himself, "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,"‖ (that is, unto an *accursed* death,) "that he might redeem those that were under the curse of the law."¶ In the number of these, we all surely are comprised. For, as our first parents, by vain ambition, aspired after and affected the majesty of God, so it behoved Christ, the repairer of our breaches, by a most profound humility, to atone for this heinous offence, and to be made

* Psal. ciii. 11, 12. † Heb. ix. 12. ‡ Rom. viii. 33, 34.
§ Rom. v. 18. ‖ Phil. ii. 8. ¶ Gal. iii. 13.

a curse, in order that the blessing might come upon all, who were cursed in Adam.*

The eleventh foundation is, that since the royal victory and triumph of Christ surpass all the multitude, weight, and heinousness of sin, together with all the power of death, hell, and Satan, what cause canst thou assign, O sinner, why the same victorious Christ should not triumph over thy sin as well as over all the rest? What! canst thou believe that *thy* transgressions *alone* are more powerful than Christ the omnipotent king? who, when he shall make all his enemies his footstool,† cannot surely fail to subdue under him, sin and death. And dost thou think that *thy* crimes *only* shall prove too hard for him? God forbid therefore, that thou shouldest call in question thy interest in so universal a conquest, in so glorious a triumph.

The twelfth foundation is the everlasting priesthood of Christ.‡ He freely grants pardon to all them that ask it; and gives the Holy Spirit to those that earnestly crave it. Nor will he, or can he refuse to any what belongs to his office;§ for he is the Saviour of the world, and the Mediator between God and man.‖ If he refuse his office to any one that implores it, he verily ceases to be a Mediator. But so far is he from this, that he freely offers to sinners the benefit of his mediatorial office. "Come unto me," saith he, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden."¶ And again: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the fountain"** and waters of life. And does he not by his apostles

* Gal. iii. 13, 14. † Psal. cx. 1. ‡ Psal. cx. 4.
§ Heb. v. 6. vii. 17. ‖ Tim. ii. 5. ¶ Matt. xi. 28.
** Isai. lv. 1.

and messengers, seriously invite us to be reconciled to God,* and at the same time offer us his help and assistance for that end? He seeks the lost sheep,† and receives into favour the prodigal son as soon as he returns.‡ Take heed therefore, O man, that thou reject not the office of Christ the Mediator, and that thou deprive not thyself of the benefit of a sacerdotal intercessor, every way full of divine consolation and comfort.

CHAP. III.

Justification before God, consists only in the perfect Obedience and Merit of Christ Jesus, and in the Remission of Sin apprehended by Faith.

As a skilful builder, when he is about to raise a lofty structure, takes care to lay first a deep and solid foundation, so the merciful and compassionate God, when he was to erect the high and everlasting palace of our salvation and righteousness, thought fit to lay the foundation thereof in the depth of his mercy, upon the person and office of his dear son Christ Jesus, as on an immoveable rock of salvation. This is the promise recorded by the prophet: "Behold, I lay in Sion

* 2 Cor. v. 20. † Ezek. xxxiv. 16. ‡ Luke xv. 20.

for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."* This stone was alluded to by Christ, when he declared to Peter, that "thereon he would build his church;" a church so firm and stedfast, that "the very gates of hell should not prevail against it."†

This was the rock and corner-stone, which was preached by the apostles Peter and Paul.‡ This is that marvellous corner-stone celebrated by the Psalmist, and upon which the 118th Psalm is grounded. Upon this foundation, God has been pleased to raise the whole structure of righteousness, faith, and eternal salvation. But as God, our merciful heavenly Father, has, on his side, placed the ground-work of our salvation and righteousness, in the unsearchable depth of his mercy and everlasting love; nay, even in his beloved son, and the paternal affection of his own heart; so he wills that on our side also the same be laid in the depth of our heart, and in the centre of our soul; in order that, through the divine light and power of faith alone, (and even faith is the blessed effect of the divine Spirit,) the righteousness of Christ may be apprehended, and without any respect of our own works, whether antecedent or consequent, be freely imputed and appropriated to us. The reasons of this way of proceeding are as follows.

In the *first* place, that God by this means might cleanse and justify a man from within, and in the inmost centre of his soul: for as man is inwardly corrupted by Satan, and infected in all the interior powers of his soul, so it is but fit that his cure should be wrought from within,

* Isa. xxviii. 16. † Matt. xvi. 18. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

and that all the faculties of his soul should be restored to their former integrity and soundness.

Secondly, our righteousness proceeds from *faith* only. This faith is wrought by God himself, and it stands entirely in his *power*,* being supported by it, and not by any human performance, or hypocritical action of men. Of this latter sort was the righteousness of the Pharisees, who made indeed a show of outward performances, but were little concerned about the reformation of the heart, and the inward recesses of the mind.

Thirdly, that our heart, soul, and spirit, renouncing human power and strength, (upon which, through the temptation of the Devil, and the snares of self-love, ambition, and pride, they too much rely) might wholly depend upon *Christ alone*, and upon his precious merit and satisfaction. For from him alone flow the gracious remission of all our sins, and the whole train of graces consequent on it; Jesus Christ having abundantly satisfied for the sins of the whole world, and reconciled the Father to mankind.

Fourthly, that the righteousness of Christ, by faith, might be made *our* own. In order to the same end he also by his word and Spirit begets this faith in our hearts, that thereby we may become actually possessed of this inestimable treasure. This is the highest, the unspeakable, and inconceivable consolation, that our righteousness is not the righteousness of a man, nor even of a saint or angel, but of Christ, and of God himself; "It is God that justifieth."† Therefore if the whole world were overflowed with the sins of one man, yet would the righ-

* 1 Cor. ii. 5. † Rom. viii. 33.

teousness of Christ be still more extensive and overflowing. For verily, "JEHOVAH is our righteousness,"* and how can sin be more powerful than the Lord Jehovah? Would it be an insufficient satisfaction, thinkest thou, if instead of a shilling which thou owest thy creditor, thou shouldest return ten thousand guineas? But such a price, nay, one infinitely greater, is paid with the blood of Christ, which therefore is called by St. Paul, "God's own blood."† Upon the whole, so great and immense is the righteousness of Christ, conferred on us by faith, that thereby we are not only made *righteous*, but also *righteousness* itself, nay, the righteousness of God.‡

But as it is not enough that a defiled infant be washed from its uncleanness, but it must also be wrapped up in clean and sweet linen;§ so Christ not only cleanses us with his blood, but clothes us also with the garment of salvation, and covers us with the robe of righteousness:‖ both which we have received from the hand of the Lord. This garment is called by the prophet, priestly or holy apparel; by David, "the beauty of holiness;"¶ by St. John, "fine linen clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints;"** by the prophet Amos, "rivers of righteousness;"†† by St. Paul, "superabounding grace,"‡‡ and "exceeding riches of grace."§§ All these expressions evidently set forth the abounding righteousness bestowed on a penitent soul, which is as great as God himself, and therefore beyond all human comprehension. Though in the state

* Jer. xxxxiii. 16.
† Acts xx. 28.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 21.
§ Ezek. xvi. 6, 14.
‖ Isai. lxi. 10.
¶ Psal. xxix. 2.
** Rev. xix. 8.
†† Amos v. 24.
‡‡ Rom. v. 20.
§§ Eph. ii. 7.

of innocency, our first parents had a complete righteousness in its kind, yet was it not so full and exuberant as that which we have recovered in Christ: for this righteousness and holiness, which we apply to ourselves by faith, is far more excellent than that which Adam would have left us, had he continued in his first perfection. Moreover, the humility and obedience of Christ, as it was more perfect, so it was more acceptable to God, than the obedience and innocency of Adam; nay, a thousand such persons as Adam, could not have come up to the perfection of Christ alone. Adam would have transmitted to us indeed an hereditary righteousness, and thereby united us with God; yet it cannot be denied, but that our union established with God in Christ is much more noble and excellent than that which we should have derived from Adam: for Christ being made man, has in himself so cleansed and exalted the human nature, that the primitive state of Adam is not at all to be compared with it.

As Christ remains united to the human nature to all eternity; so all believers continue in the same united to God; because Christ is wholly ours, and we are wholly his. Whence it follows, that whatever purity the human nature hath obtained in general in His person, is also transferred to the nature of each believer in particular. This will appear in the transformation of our bodies at the last day, when "they shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ."* Nay, even in this life, it is said with respect to our faith: "Behold, thou art fair, my love;"† "glorious, not having spot or wrinkle:"‡ "the

* Phil. iii. 21. † Cant i. 15. ‡ Eph. v. 27.

king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold."* In a word, our righteousness in Christ is no less immense than God himself; and if his depth may be found out, so will our righteousness. Whence all creatures, finding nothing that can be blamed in man, must stand as it were astonished, and cry out with admiration; "Who is he that shall accuse or condemn man, whose righteousness is the Son of God himself?"† And this is that righteousness of faith on which we rest, as on an impregnable rock, and which is a foundation that cannot be shaken. Of this we glory, in this we rejoice in time and in eternity. By this we are conquerors, and triumph over sin, death, the devil, and hell. By this we tread upon the lion and adder, and trample under foot the young lion and the dragon.‡

Fifthly, an angel cannot be the foundation of our righteousness, much less any *man*. The righteousness of man is but weak and inconstant; whatever is built thereon falls soon to the ground and comes to nothing. For this reason, our righteousness must have another foundation; a foundation, I mean, which is firm and constant, and not liable to be shattered to pieces, though the "mountains should depart, and the hills be removed."§ "An everlasting righteousness must be brought in,"‖ so that "the salvation of the Lord may be for ever, and his righteousness be not abolished."¶ A most excellent, eternal, and sovereign person, must procure an eternal and infinite good, by an immense and infinite satisfaction offered for us.

* Psal. xlv. 13. † Rom. viii. 34. ‡ Psal. xci. 13. Luke x. 19.
§ Isai. liv. 10. ‖ Dan. ix. 24. ¶ Isai. li. 6.

The *sixth* cause why God will have our righteousness to be apprehended by faith, is his truth and promise, on which our faith entirely rests, and by which God ascertained and promised righteousness to Abraham, and to all his faithful seed. Whence St. Paul argues, that "our righteousness must be of faith, that it "might be by grace; to the end that the promise might be sure."* Upon this promise of grace, fulfilled in Christ, has God established our righteousness and salvation, as the same apostle in another place more fully asserts; "Even as Abraham," says he, "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham: saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham."† And thus "grace and truth are come by Jesus Christ."‡

Seventhly, God has made his grace, and the merit of Christ, the basis of our righteousness, that Christ alone may have the honour of it. "In him alone is our help."§ He is the beginning, middle, and end of our righteousness and salvation, that "every mouth may be stopped."‖ For we are "saved by grace through faith; not of works, lest any man should boast."¶ But if our righteousness were raised on our own works and merits, there would then be no room for grace, nor should we have occa-

* Rom. iv. 16. † Gal. iii. 6, 9. ‡ Job. i. 17.
§ Hos. xiii. 9. ‖ Rom. iii. 19. ¶ Eph. ii. 9.

sion for mercy or pardon of sin, "for which every one that is godly doth pray."* Moreover, there would be no place for humility, nor for the fear of God; neither would faith and prayer turn to any great account; yea, we should have no need of a Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour. Christ had then died in vain; and we should be obliged, both by an external and internal obedience, perfectly to fulfil the whole law. We should remain under the curse, as being fallen from grace, and having lost Christ; as St. Paul strongly argues in his epistle to the Galatians. So that the doctrine of justification by *works*, is in the sight of God altogether inconsistent with the doctrine of faith, and with the whole scripture, both of the Old Testament and the New.

In short, our salvation and righteousness are entirely raised upon the eternal grace of God, and the person and office of Christ; and in Christ alone we are made righteous, holy, alive, blessed, sons and heirs of God. The righteousness of Christ is ours, his goodness ours, his holiness ours; his life ours, his happiness ours, and lastly, the sonship and inheritance of Christ are ours; and so the WHOLE Christ, both according to his divine and human nature, is ours; (for God gives us the WHOLE CHRIST for a Saviour, that he with his person, office, grace, glory, and blessedness, may be wholly appropriated to us.) That all this is our own, is our highest consolation, glory, praise, honour, love, joy, peace before God and all the angels and elect; it is our sublimest wisdom,

* Psal. xxxii. 6.

strength, might, victory, and triumph over sin and death, devil and hell, the world, and all our enemies. For which God be praised to all eternity! Amen.

CHAP. IV.

Of saving Faith and its Fruits.

The true Christian is not only justified by faith in Christ, but is also made a temple and habitation of Christ and of the Holy Spirit.* To this end the good spirit of God has purified his heart by faith:† and it is fit that Christ should live in his temple, together with his love, humility and meekness.‡ To this end also thy Redeemer has bestowed upon thee his Holy Spirit, that he might create in thee a new heart, and endue thee with so cheerful and ready a mind, as to do the will of God freely, without any unwillness or compulsion. This free and holy obedience proceeds not from the rigour of the law, or any legal commandment; but from a lively faith in Christ. It is certain therefore, that "the law is not made for a righteous man,"§ to *compel* him to do good; though it is in other respects an excellent rule by which to regulate a

* 1 Cor. vi. 19. † Eph. iii. 17.
‡ Acts xv. 9. § 1 Tim. i. 9.

Christian's life and manners. For a true and living faith does every thing freely and of its own accord; it renews the man, it purifies the heart, it produces fervent love to our neighbour, it hopes and considers such things as are not yet seen. Faith prays, praises, fears, and confesses God. It is also patient, humble, merciful, loving, meek, easy to be reconciled, compassionate, peaceful. Faith readily forgives offences; hungers and thirsts after righteousness; embraces God with all his grace, and Christ with all his merit; and obtains a complete remission of all sins.

Whoever does not perceive in his heart these fruits of the spirit, and the in-dwelling of Christ by faith, let him humbly intreat the Lord, and that with tears and groans, that he may obtain them. I would not be understood, however, as if a Christian in this life could attain to perfect and absolute holiness; for even the greatest saints are still sensible of their infirmities; of which the book of Psalms and the Lord's-Prayer fully convince us. God therefore requires that our righteousness, by which we are to please him, should be entirely apprehended by faith; and lest we should act the hypocrite under the cover of an *imputative* righteousness, or indulge the flesh under colour of mercy, he wills that his righteousness should also be stamped on our very heart, and on the inmost centre of our souls: and likewise that all the fruits of faith and righteousness should proceed from a living and sound principle seated within the mind. According to this inward and leading principle, God judges all our works, whether they be true and genuine, or false and spurious.

Here again we do not assert any perfection in

this present world, but only require that a Christian should walk in newness of life, and approve himself by such works as are cleared from guile and hypocrisy. For it is by no means possible, that the fruits of the spirit enumerated by St. Paul should not be found in that man in whom the Spirit of God himself dwells ;* or that a good tree should not be known by its fruits, though they may not be altogether so perfect and angelical as could be wished, but stained and often obscured by various frailties and imperfections. This however is certain, that all hypocrisy and insincerity, are utterly to be banished from a regenerate state ; nor are the fruits of a Christian to proceed from an empty profession, or a lifeless appearance of things, but from truth and reality.

I do not deny on the one hand, but that the Christian church may be fitly compared to an hospital crowded with all manner of sick ; or to a house inhabited by sinners as well as by saints. I believe also that the greater part, like feeble children, have not yet attained to the ability of walking alone ; but that leaning to walls they gradually learn to walk steadily. Hence it is necessary to " bear one another's burthens,"† and never rashly to judge or condemn those who by reason of their weakness halt behind.‡ We ought rather to restore in the spirit of meekness those that stumble, and with great tenderness to rectify what is amiss in them. Thus we learn to read our own imperfections in the infirmities of our brother.

But on the other hand, Christians ought to labour to make continual advances in the spiri-

* Gal. v. 22. † Gal. vi. 2. ‡ Rom. xiv. 1.

tual life. They ought not to continue always in a state of infancy and weakness, how difficult soever it be to conquer the flesh that obstructs our growth. They ought to be fervent in the practice of "charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned;"* and bear this in perpetual remembrance, that all outward performances are valued by God according to the inward disposition of the heart. If the heart be good, thou mayest then be assured, that whatever thou dost is also good before God: but if the heart be evil, corrupt, and envious, then all thy works are evil and hateful. Such as thou art inwardly, and in thy heart, such art thou accounted to be before God; and such are thy prayers, thy public worship, thy giving of alms, thy receiving the sacrament, and all thy other performances.

Whosoever therefore is willing to try his own faith and inward condition, I would advise him to set before his eyes the ten commandments, (as by Christ himself interpreted;† and to learn to judge of his actions by his heart. By such an impartial trial, he will clearly perceive whether what he does be acceptable or unacceptable to God, and whether he bring forth the genuine fruits of that inward righteousness which is by faith. For example, thou considerest that thou dost not defile thyself with any external idolatry, and that for this reason thy service must be pleasing to God. I cannot but own, that in keeping from idols thou dost surely well; but I would have thee farther inquire, whether thou also abhorrest all manner of *internal* idolatry? Or whether thou hast set up an inward idol in some secret

* 1 Tim. i. 5. † Matt. v. and vi.

corner of the heart, to which thou payest thy vows? Examine thyself whether thou art *within*, what thou pofessest to be *without?* See whether thy heart be not set upon the world, upon avarice, and pride? If so, then thou art assuredly guilty of most dangerous idolatry; for the creature has engrossed those noble affections which should be entirely surrendered to the Creator, and dedicated to him alone.

Thou assurest us thou art *very punctual in saying thy prayers, and in praising God; and that thou dost not neglect to offer up thy thanks for benefits received at his hands;* but didst thou ever consider, whether thou cursest in thy heart, whilst thou prayest with thy lips? Whether thou contradictest by thy actions what thou expressest in thy words? If so, thy prayer will prove but a sorry performance, and all thy thanks and praises will be trifling and vain.

Thou tellest us how strictly thou *keepest the sabbath-day, and the feasts and fasts of the church.* In this truly thou dost well; but look on the inward frame of thy soul. Dost thou celebrate the true sabbath in thy heart? Dost thou rest from evil thoughts and wicked desires? Is thy heart devoted to God, and freed from noise and clamour, that God himself may work in it? Thou *attendest divine service at church;* it is well done; but see that thou carry not with thee to church the canker-worm of pride and vanity. This would convert thy service into mere formality, and all thy performances into an empty shew.

Thou yieldest external obedience to God and to thy superiors; but does that which passes within thy soul agree with this exterior conduct? Is

every thing done with an upright and willing mind? Dost thou act from a principle of love, or of fear only? If it be fear that constrains thee to an external compliance, then know assuredly that thy obedience is no more than hypocrisy.

Thou defilest not thy hands with blood and slaughter, and thinkest thyself free from the crime of *murder*. But take a view of thy heart: for when the heart burns with wrath and anger, and when this, as a flame, flashes out upon thy face and countenance; when thy inward wrath breaks out into reproaches and curses, saying to thy brother, *Raca*, and *Thou fool;* then surely thou art become guilty of the judgment, of the council, and of everlasting fire.* What therefore will it avail thee that thy hand is unpolluted with blood, whilst thy heart accuses thee of hatred and murder? That thou smitest not with the sword, whilst thou brandishest thy pernicious tongue against thy neighbour? For within, in thy heart, thou harbourest the murderer, the adulterer, the thief, and the liar: Here it is thou must look for the beast, the evil lust, and the root of all malice and mischief: which, if it be not destroyed by serious repentance, by true contrition and conversion, by faith and the blood of Christ, it is impossible that thou shouldest do so much as one work acceptable to God; who judges of all thy actions by the inward temper and disposition of the heart.

Of this Christ himself gives us an example from the sixth commandment, saying, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave

* Matt. v. 22.

there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother."* That is, it will not at all avail thee to pray, to sacrifice, to worship God, and to take the sacrament; yea, all thy actions will be converted into so many sins, because God regards the heart only, and not the outward performance. Hence St. Paul commands to "lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting."† And St. Peter enjoins married persons to beware of anger, and to dwell together in love and harmony, as heirs together of the grace of life, "that their prayers be not hindered."‡ Nay, the Lord Jesus himself strongly exhorts us to brotherly reconciliation, by the three following arguments.§

The first is, "agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him;" that is, whilst thou art on this side of eternity: for our life indeed is nothing else but a perpetual motion towards death and the grave. If in this life thou art not freed from the bonds of wrath, thou shalt remain a captive to them, yea, to the Devil himself, throughout all eternity.

The second argument is, "lest at any time the adversary deliver thee up to the judge." It is a terrible thing to be summoned to the tribunal of God, and before so tremendous a judge, to plead our cause against an accusing adversary. Whereas, whatever is pardoned, settled, and forgiven in this life, the same will also be forgiven and entirely pardoned in the next. Whence we may gather how much God regards the love of our neighbour, since he will have it by no means separated from the love of himself; and therefore

* Matt. v. 23, 24. † 1 Tim. ii. 8.
‡ 1 Pet. iii. 7. § Matt. v. 25, 26.

refuses to admit of our love to him, unless it be linked to that of our neighbour. And why? God is Love itself, and loveth man as his own soul.

The third argument is, "lest thou be cast into prison, whence thou canst not come out till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." It is agreeable to the divine justice, so to deal with us there, as we have dealt with our neighbour here; and "with that measure we have meted withal, to measure to us again."* Wherefore if thou refusest to forgive any brother his faults, the judgment of God is certain; that in like manner no sin shall be remitted to thee. This will prove a burden heavy enough. For the man that dies in this bitter, irreconcileable temper, must, in the flames of hell, continue a debtor to all eternity, and this without any hope or prospect of ever lessening the debts he has here contracted.

Upon the whole, we see that the Son of God, by an example, has taught us, that we must judge of the worth of our outward works, nay, of all our religion, by the inward disposition and principle that sways the heart. But perhaps thou still continuest to flatter thyself, and to say, "I am baptized into Christ; I have the pure word of God; I hear it; I receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; I also believe and confess all the articles of the Christian faith: wherefore it cannot be, but that my life and actions must be pleasing to God; I am a Christian in truth, and in the right way to be saved." This, alas! is the general, but false reasoning of Christians in these days, who will needs regard their outward

* Luke vi. 38.

performances as the very essential points of the Christian faith. It might do well enough, if the heart did but agree with their profession: for without this, all is mere trifling, and a dead hypocritical shew. Look therefore into this, and learn to judge of thyself by the inward frame of thy soul. Thou boastest indeed, thou art a Christian, and an excellent name it is; but dost thou consider, whether thy heart and thy actions agree with a name so sacred? Hast thou received the unction from above, and art thou possessed of the fruits of the spirit, that demonstrate a Christian?* If these be wanting, thou wilt prove in the end but a false and spurious Christian, without any great ground upon which to depend. Thou assertest farther, that thou art baptized; and so indeed thou art! But search the state of thy heart, and inquire whether thou livest in the new birth, in daily repentance, and an unwearied mortification of the old man. See whether thou bringest forth fruit answerable to the baptismal covenant, in which thou art engaged?

Thou sayest, thou hast the oracles of God committed to thee, and that thou hearest and readest them: but inspect thy heart, and consider whether the word be converted into thy life and spirit, as bodily food passes into thy flesh and blood? Whether thou hast lived up to its direction, and expressed the effect of it in thy conduct? If thou contentest thyself with the bare *hearing* thereof, thou must know that this will never yield eternal salvation, and that thou deceivest thyself in a matter of infinite importance. For this reason has the Lord compared

* 1 Joh. ii. 27.

the kingdom of Heaven to leaven, which gradually spreads itself through the whole lump, and converts every part into its own nature; thereby to set forth that divine energy, and that lively impression which the Word ought to make upon our will and affections.* Truly, "not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of the Father which is in Heaven."† Thou thinkest that thou dost wonderful service to the church, when with a singular zeal thou defendest the purity of its doctrine: and indeed, this is no contemptible piece of service. Nevertheless, I would have thee inquire, whether by the purity of the doctrine, and thy defence of it, thou hast also attained a true purity of the heart. Do we not find many rigid defenders of the pure doctrine, who in their lives are the most impious wretches that can be, full of pride, bitterness, covetousness, and other such vices? Church and doctrine, orthodoxy and the name of God itself, is made a common shelter for all manner of vices, which screen themselves under the same, with impunity.

Thou affirmest, that thou often art present at the Lord's supper, and attendest that ordinance at the usual time. And what then? Search thine own heart. Thou hast often received the flesh and blood of Christ in this sacrament: why then do the flesh and blood of Adam so visibly live and reign in thee? Should not the life of Christ shine forth in thy whole conversation? Should not his love, his humility, and meekness, diffuse themselves through all thy manners? Where is the advantage, if thou receivest Christ

* Matt. xiii. 33. † Matt. vii. 21.

in the sacrament, and deniest him in thy life and actions?

Thou sayest, that thou believest and confessest all the articles of the Christian faith. It is well! but have recourse to the touchstone of the heart. That is only a true faith, which unites man with God, and God with man; by which God dwells, lives, and operates in man. If these effects be wanting in thee, thy faith is false, and so far from uniting thee with God, it sets thee at a greater distance from him. This, however, is not to be understood of the faith of weak and feeble Christians, which is often so clouded, as to render it hard to perceive its life and motion. For even a weak faith, though it be like smoking flax, has in it all the properties of a strong faith, though it cannot exert itself with equal strength and energy. It heartily cleaves to God, and brings forth fruit amidst all those infirmities with which it struggles. But I would have it understood of faith in general, and of the trial and fruits of it; that if thou believest in Christ, then Christ must certainly live in thee by faith, or thine will prove but an empty, naked profession.* If thou believest that Christ suffered death for thy sins, thou must also die with him to the same, and renounce the world, with all its pride and avarice.† If this effect do not follow, then truly thy faith is vain, and thy verbal profession of the Christian articles will yield but poor comfort at last.

If thou believest that Christ was crucified for the sins of the world, thou must with him be crucified to the same. If thou refusest to comply with this, thou canst not be a living member

* Gal. ii. 20. † Rom. vi. 2.

of Christ, nor be united with him by faith. If thou believest that Christ is risen from the dead, it is thy duty to rise spiritually with him, and firmly adhere to him, thy Head and Saviour. In a word, the birth, cross, passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, must after a spiritual manner be transacted in thee. And this is the blessed effect of faith, and the influence it has on believing souls. Wherever this effect is wanting, there is nothing but a lifeless image of faith, with which men miserably deceive themselves. So if thou believest in the holy spirit, it is certain that the same spirit in whom thou believest, must of necessity dwell and reign in thy heart, and enlighten and sanctify it. For, "as many as are led by the spirit of God, they (and they only) are the sons of God."*

Therefore, dear Christian! let not your religion be confined to bare externals, but see that it proceed from the more inward recesses of a heart endued with a true, living, and active faith, and with an unfeigned, inward, and daily repentance. If you put away from you this inward life, this faith, and this repentance, it is certain you strip your religion of all essential goodness, and instead of a living principle, which ought to be established in the mind, you carry about an empty insignificant name, which will avail you nothing in that day, wherein God is to judge all things according to the inward frame of the heart. But if you are truly affected with a sense of your inward impurities, then flee without delay to the healing fountain of grace! Draw and drink, pray and knock, sigh and cry, Lord,

* Rom. viii. 14.

have mercy upon me! Then your heart shall be cured, your sin covered, and your transgression cancelled.

CHAP. V.

Of the Efficacy of the Word of God.

The way by which we are to arrive at true and substantial wisdom, and become friends of God, is to submit ourselves to the discipline of repentance, and to lead a life conformable to the word of God. Such a life as this cannot fail to be attended with true illumination of the mind, and an increase of all divine graces; nay, with so close an alliance with God himself, as to make us "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust."* An example of this we have in Enoch, who having "walked with God, was not, for God took him" to himself.†

To such a holy life as this David aspired with the utmost fervour of spirit, proposing two means by which to obtain it; the first, *serious prayer;* and the second, a *diligent study and practice of the word of God.* "I cried," says

* 2 Pet. i. 4. † Gen. v. 24.

he, " with my whole heart ; hear me, O Lord : I will keep thy statutes. I cried unto thee, save me ; and I shall keep thy testimonies ;"* teaching by these words how important *True Christianity* is ; and that it requires no less than an exact conformity of the life and actions to the divine word.

Flesh and blood naturally strive against the word of God, and that holiness of life which it requires : and are besides, inconstant and weak, and prone to yield to the enticements of the world. The devil on all occasions hinders our progress, and opposes our endeavours on every side. This is followed by a multitude of evil examples, and the persecutions which wicked men raise in opposition to those souls that enter upon another course of life. Against obstinate evils, such as these, all the strength of the soul is to be opposed. This we learn from the example of David, who cried unto the Lord *with his whole heart*, in order that he might better digest the word, and by leading such a life as the gospel requires, continue in the favour of God. This certainly ought also to be our main concern; the favour of God being infinitely preferable to all that the world affords. Whoever pleases God, and is his friend, most effectually secures himself thereby from the malice of all his enemies. Hence *serious and fervent prayer* is, as I noticed before, the first step to a holy life.

The second means to obtain a holy life, is expressed in the following words of the same prophet ; " I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried : I hoped in thy word : mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate

* Psal. cxix. 145.

in thy word."† Here he declares the earnest study, love, and affection, which are due to the word of God; as also the time best suited for meditating in it, namely, the morning. The faculties of the mind are then more strong and vigorous than at other times; and are best disposed for searching into divine subjects. The truth of this is at that season most feelingly perceived, when the soul, afflicted by sadness and deep spiritual temptations, "watches for the morning,"† and with "waking eyes,"‡ expects help from the Lord. She is then "as a sparrow alone upon the house top," as a melancholy owl in the desert;§ and "so weary with groaning,"‖ as to be almost ready to expire.

This is that exercise of the cross, or school of affliction, in which all saints are most effectually catechised for a happy eternity. Whoever is not inured to this sort of trials, can know but little of God and of his word. In this exercise, all the natural powers of soul and life consume away, that God alone may become our strength and support. By such inward trials as these, the carnal life is likewise more and more weakened, and the quickening power of God and of his word, perceived with the greater effect and experience. And truly all our efforts ought to centre in this, that the external *hearing and reading of the divine word be practically applied to the mind, and improved into Christian experience.*

This doctrine therefore, I would have firmly rooted in thy mind, namely, that not the reading or hearing, but the doing and practising of

* Psal. cxix. 147. † Psal. cxxx. 6. ‡ Psal. lxxvii. 4.
§ Psal. cii. 6, 7. ‖ Psal. vi. 6.

the word, demonstrates the true Christian. Without this practical improvement, hearing and reading will be of no great advantage. For the word was not committed to writing, that it might be read and known only, but that it might be reduced to practice. As a medicine gives no relief to the patient who hears of, or looks upon it, but at the same time refuses to take it; so the word, though a remedy for our diseased nature, can yet cure no man, or restore him from death to life, whilst he refuses to take what the word prescribes. Therefore, in order to this, fervent and constant prayer (according to the example set us by David,) will be requisite in order to enable us to conform our life and actions to the divine word. What advantage is it to an artist that he knows an art, if he never practise it? Will not his supine and careless neglect reduce him at length to poverty? And what will it avail us to know the word of God, and not do it? "That servant," says our Saviour, "which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."* And St. Peter makes no scruple to affirm, that "it had been better for such not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."†

As a father does not own him for his son, who in every thing acts contrary to his will, so not words, but the life and actions, are marks and indications of a son of God, according to that saying of our Saviour: "If ye were Abraham's

* Luke xii. 47. † 2 Pet. ii. 21.

children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me,—this did not Abraham.—Ye are of your father the devil."* Why should a barren and fruitless tree take up any room in the garden, when it only incumbers the ground on which it grows? It is surely fit for nothing, but to be cast into the fire, as is represented in the parable of the barren fig-tree.†

As it would be ridiculous to give a raven the name of a swan, to which it has no resemblance; so if the men of this age should be called by the name of true Christians, whilst so little of a Christian temper appears in their life and manners, I think it would be justly counted egregious folly. It is not by words or confessions, but by deeds and actions, that we are to judge of a Christians's state, according to that of St. Paul; "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."‡ Such is the condition of most men at this day, that those who make the strongest pretences to the Christian name, do nothing but what is contrary to the Christian spirit. They are like those professors at Rome, concerning whom Laurentius Valla exclaimed when reading these words of our Lord; "Blessed are the merciful, blessed are the peacemakers,"§ &c.—"*Surely either these words are not true, or we are no Christians.*"

Man is corrupted to such a degree, that even not a few brute creatures, visibly surpass him in virtue and goodness. The dove excels him in harmlessness;‖ the ant in painful industry;¶ the stork in a careful provision for the aged; the

* Joh. viii. 39, 40. 44. † Luke xiii. 6, 7. ‡ 1 Cor. iv. 20.
§ Matt. v. 7. 9. ‖ Mat. x. 16. ¶ Prov. vi. 6.

dog in love and fidelity; the ox and ass in knowledge of their master;* the sheep in meekness;† the lion in generosity and clemency towards the weak; the cock in watchfulness; and the serpent in wisdom. On the contrary, man in his natural state exceeds all the beasts in mischief. He is more fierce than a wolf; more crafty than a fox; more stately than a peacock; more voracious than a swine; more pestilent than a viper; more cruel than a bear.

Indeed, these vices and mischiefs, which go single and unaccompanied in brutes, (each species having its peculiar bad quality,) are oftentimes crouded together in one natural man. So that the human body is very significantly called by the apostle, "the body of sin,"‡ as being full of sins, and infected with all manner of defilements. Not to mention, that there is no creature so bad and pernicious, but that it is still of some use or other for the support of men. The foxes and wolves, with their skins and furs, secure men from the injuries of a rigorous season. But, alas! what good is there to be found in a man abandoned to the conduct of an unregenerate nature? "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually;"§ as is more than once expressed in scripture. He exercises his reason to practise fraud; he wastes his body with pride and lewdness; and is both inwardly and outwardly so deeply corrupted, that all his members are justly called the "instruments" or weapons "of unrighteousness."‖ Hence it is, that the sacred scriptures represent our nature in colours so black and odious, as

* Isai.. i. 3. † Isa. liii. 7. ‡ Rom. vi. 6.
§ Gen. vi. 5, viii. 21. ‖ Rom. vi. 13.

may strike terror into every man that reads it. "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

Behold here the deplorable image of the natural man! Behold the abomination that is common to us all! And tell me whether a man can see the kingdom of God, unless he be born again from above, or, as St. Paul expresses it, "unless he be renewed in the spirit of his mind: putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness?"† And the same apostle says, "but ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus."‡ Yea, he says, "they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."§ Good God! If those belong not to Christ, who do not mortify the members of unrighteousness, but live in the pollutions of sin, then they surely must belong to the devil, and be without any hope of the kingdom of Heaven, who do not crucify the flesh. For whosoever desires to please God, must become "a new creature" in Christ;‖ "in whom neither circumcision

* Rom. iii. 10, 18. † Eph. iv. 23. Col. iii. 10.
‡ Eph. iv. 20, 21. § Gal. v. 24. ‖ 2 Cor. v. 17

availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."* And since these are the terms on which our eternal welfare depends, let it be our main concern, that we more and more vanquish sin in our mortal bodies, and that we be members, not of Satan, but of Jesus Christ. Let us earnestly endeavour, that the divine word may gain ground, and fructify in our souls. Let us strive to render our lives acceptable to God, and that by persevering in his grace to the end, we may for ever continue "vessels of mercy, and not of wrath."†

It is for this reason David so heartily wishes to lead a holy life, conformably to the word of God: "I cried," says he, "with my whole heart, hear me, O Lord; I will keep thy statutes:"‡ for since our conversion is entirely from above, it follows, that a holy life must be obtained by continual prayer and supplication. "Heal me, O Lord," says another prophet, "and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise."§ And David again, "I cried unto thee, save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies."‖ Sin and the kingdom of Satan are, indeed, so strong and powerful in man, that it is in vain to attempt their conquest without the divine aid and assistance.

Let us therefore shake off all remissness and negligence, and let us acquit ourselves not slothfully, but diligently, in a matter of so great importance. David himself further adds, "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy

* Gal. vi. 15. † Rom. ix. 22, 23. ‡ Psal. cxix. 145.
§ Jer. xvii. 14. ‖ Psal. cxix. 146.

word."* And remarkable are the words of the prophet on this account: "He wakeneth me morning by morning; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned."† With which that of Solomon agrees: "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh."‡

In these and the like sentences of scripture, we may view the fatherly care and condescending love of our merciful God; since his chief delight is to be conversant with the sons of men, to speak with them, and to instruct them. Hence he appointed his son to be our heavenly teacher and master; of which the Lord Jesus himself gave a visible proof in the very infancy of his life, when he was found in the temple in the midst of the doctors, and astonished the hearers with "his understanding and answers."§ This was performed by our Saviour, not merely on account of the Jewish temple, which is now destroyed; but rather on account of the Christian church itself, which is the true and heavenly Jerusalem, taught and instructed by his word and spirit. It was also done with reference to our hearts, in which he will teach, comfort, enlighten and sanctify us. Here he will pray, ask questions, and answer them; and speak in holy thoughts, devout meditations, and heavenly inspirations. And in this the doctrinal or prophetical office of Christ consists. Hence also he replied to his mother in these comfortable words; "how is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?"‖ meaning that office which was conferred upon him by his father. This office he now performs at the right

* Psal. cxix. 147, 148. † Isai. l. 4. ‡ Song v. 2.
§ Luke ii. 47. ‖ Luke ii. 49.

hand of God, as our true and only high-priest; and upon earth he discharges it by his *word;* by means of which he also inwardly preaches in our hearts, as well as by his Holy Spirit and gracious illumination. Without this inward preaching of the word, the outward must prove barren and ineffectual, according to that of the apostle: "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."*

CHAP. VI.

Union with Christ by Faith constitutes the Happiness and Perfection of Man.

As man by his defection from God, through ambition and self-love, was separated from him, and fell from the perfection in which he was created; so he must of necessity return to that original tranquillity and happiness, by a *union* with God; in which the whole of human perfection consists. It was therefore necessary, that the Son of God should become man, in order that the human nature being again united to God, might thereby be restored to its primitive integrity and perfection. As the divine and human

* 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

natures are personally united in Christ; so should we all, through grace, be united to him by faith, as to our eternal and sovereign good. In this manner it pleased God to rectify the exceeding corruption of our nature by the abounding goodness of his grace. This union is declared by the Son of God himself: "I will betroth thee," says he, "unto me for ever, in loving kindness and in mercies."* For since our nature is infected and corrupted by *sin*, the greatest of evils, it could not be restored and healed but by GOD himself, the greatest of goods.

But as the union of the divine and human nature in Christ is eternal, and never to be dissolved, insomuch that even death itself could not break asunder so sacred a bond: so Christ our head is to be so firmly united with his faithful members, that neither life nor death may ever be able to divorce them from him. This is also declared by the prophet Hosea, in the person of Christ: "I will," says he, "betroth thee unto me for ever." This union by faith, is of the highest necessity, because "our iniquities have separated between us and our God."† And this deplorable state will be our lot to all eternity, except Christ dwell in us here by faith. Moreover, we are not able to do the least good, unless Christ himself work it in us. Hence, says the apostle, "not I, but the grace of God which is with me."‡ And the Lord himself: "without me ye can do nothing:"§ the truth of which he illustrates by an elegant comparison taken from the vine and the branches. Whence it naturally follows, that if we are, or do any good at all, it

* Hos. ii. 19.
† Isai. lix. 2.
‡ 1 Cor. xv. 10.
§ Joh. xv. 5.

is altogether to be ascribed to God alone; according to what is said by the prophet: "Thou hast wrought all our works in us;"* and by another: "I am like a green fir-tree; from me is thy fruit found."†

O man! consider, therefore, what thou art, and what thou canst do. What hast thou been able to contribute to thy restoration and the renovation of thy depraved nature? Surely, as thou couldst not afford any help towards the generation, or nativity of thy body, nor create thyself; so neither canst thou bring any assistance towards thy new birth, or regeneration in the spirit. Thou canst indeed lose, corrupt, and destroy thyself; but to renew, to restore, to heal, to justify, and to quicken thyself, is a work entirely beyond thy strength. Couldest thou contribute any thing that God might become man? No. There is nothing therefore that thou canst arrogate to thyself, or ascribe to thy own ability. The more a man attributes to his own will, strength, and ability, the more effectually does he obstruct divine grace, and the reparation of his corrupted nature. Let us therefore wholly renounce our own strength, our own wisdom, our own will, and self-love, that being thus resigned to God alone, we may suffer his power freely to work in us, so that nothing may, in the least, oppose the will and operations of the Lord.

Until thou art brought to this, O Christian, that thy *mind become merely passive*, and that thou purely *sufferest* the operation and will of God, it is evident, that God is impeded by thee, so that he cannot unite himself with thy soul; or by true renovation of thy corrupt nature establish

* Isai. xxvi. 12. † Hos. xiv. 8.

his image there. For our own will, self-love, ambition, the opinion of our own wisdom, and whatever we arrogantly claim to ourselves, are so many impediments, why God cannot freely operate in us, and effect his good will. And as a man's own will more and more corrupts and depraves him; so the will of God more and more perfects and restores him.

Hence it is said by a good man, that "the highest perfection of religion, consists in forsaking our own will." And by St. Augustine, "If *to love God* is the greatest good to man, *to love himself* must needs be his greatest evil. And, if such is the nature of good, that it diffuses and communicates itself; of necessity self-love must be a great evil, since it engrosses to itself both its own and the goods of others, and will not part with any of them." Of this even Seneca himself was not ignorant, when he said: "that only is an accession to virtue, which is a denial of thy own will." And again: "unless thou departest from thyself, thou canst not approach God, who is above thee."

Indeed our *own will* is nothing else but a defection from God. Defection verily is easy, smooth, and pleasant; but the recovery from it, is bitter, troublesome, and extremely difficult; yea, even beyond all the power of the creature. For man, by his own strength, can neither return nor in any wise help himself, whether in will or deed. Man's will is captive, and his works are dead. Christ alone is able to support the soul in the beginning, progress, or end of its warfare. And here he lays before us two means, the *law* and the *gospel*; or *repentance* and *remission* of sin. Through the *law*, in the first place, thou must die with Christ, and by

true sorrow and brokenness of heart sacrifice thy own will. Thou must become vile in thine own eyes, and resign thyself wholly to Christ. This being done, grace and forgiveness of sin are conferred through the *gospel*, and man that was dead before, is raised up again by faith. Whence it appears, that no man can by his own strength convert and quicken himself. For it is absolutely necessary that he hate, deny, and lose himself; that he be displeased with, and die unto himself; and that his hope be placed entirely in God alone, by whose grace he expects to live.

But even this self-hatred, denial, and mortification, are not the effect of our own will and ability. "It is not," says St. Paul, "of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."* It is God therefore alone who operates all this in us by his grace, and by the power of his good spirit: so that our justification is not derived from any creature whatsoever, but from God alone, whose work and gift it is. It is certain, that the most dangerous enemy any man has, is *himself;* insomuch that we have great reason to implore the Lord to deliver us from ourselves and all that we have by nature, and then to restore to us that which flows from his grace. By our own strength we are not able to perform the least good, if God himself, even after conversion, do not graciously support us. Who is there that can endue us with love and mercy, but God, who is LOVE itself, and from whom all other graces proceed? It is certain therefore, that Christ *alone* is our help and support in that day, when the endeavours of men cannot save us. But after all, be

* Rom. ix. 16.

the condition ever so low to which man has been brought by the fall of Adam, he is now raised again by Christ, and even exalted to a higher degree of goodness and dignity than he possessed before. But of this more shall be said.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Old and New Man.

In every Christian there is found a twofold man, opposed to one another. This will more fully appear from the following statement:

Adam,	Christ.
Old man,	New man.
Outward man,	Inward man.
Old birth,	New birth.
Flesh,	Spirit.
Nature,	Grace.
Reason,	Faith.
Darkness,	Light.
Tree of death,	Tree of life.
Evil fruit,	Good fruit.
Sin,	Righteousness.
Damnation,	Salvation.
Death,	Life.
Old Jerusalem,	New Jerusalem.
Kingdom of the devil,	Kingdom of God.
Seed of the serpent,	Seed of God.
Natural man,	Spiritual man.
Image of the earthly,	Image of the heavenly.

The truth of this statement, the scripture, as well as experience, abundantly confirms. The former speaks largely of the old and the new, of the inward and outward man. See Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 16. It teaches also that the spirit of God is in us: Rom. viii. 11. 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19. 2 Cor. v. 5. Eph. i. 13. And likewise Christ, Gal. ii. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Experience* moreover demonstrates the same. Hither may also be referred that striving and struggling of the flesh and spirit, from which even the saints are not altogether free.* Likewise the different fruits of the flesh and spirit reckoned up by St. Paul.† This doctrine is therefore firmly stated in scripture, and too certain to be called in question by any Christian. It is the hinge, as it were, on which all the scripture moves, and the foundation on which the true knowledge of man depends.

Out of the same fountain issues true repentance, or the death of Adam, and the life of Christ in us. For no sooner does Adam die in us, but there perishes with him all that is originally derived from him; the old outward man, the old birth, the flesh, nature, corrupt reason, darkness, the tree of death, evil fruits, sin, death, damnation, the seed of the serpent, the natural man, the earthly image, the old Jerusalem, and the whole kingdom of Satan. But as long as Adam lives, there also live and reign with him the old man, and the carnal birth, the flesh, nature, corrupt reason, darkness, and the whole train of evils before mentioned, being all comprised under the kingdom of Satan, and subject to damnation, and to the curse everlasting.

* Rom. vii. 23. † Gal. v. 19.

But if, on the other hand, Christ live in any one, then verily there live and reign with him the new and inward man, the new birth, the spirit, grace, faith, light, the tree of life, good fruits, righteousness, life, happiness, the seed of God, the spiritual man, the heavenly image, the new Jerusalem, and the kingdom of God. All which are emanations of the divine blessing, and tend to eternal salvation. Here is a matter of difficulty and importance, namely, so to order one's life and conduct, that Christ the new Adam, and not the old Adam, may live and reign in us.

Therefore it is necessary for a man to watch and fast, to pray, fight, and strive; and, as St. Paul expresses it, to examine himself if Christ be in him.* He is to work out his salvation with fear and trembling.† He is to enter through the strait gate and the narrow way in Christ.‡ That is, man must now hate and deny himself, forsake all,§ and die unto sin.‖ This surely is not to be effected, as the delicate Christians of this age imagine, by any careless and slight application of mind, but by an inward and profound sorrow, contrition, and brokenness of heart, together with groans and tears not to be uttered. These inward exercises, and acts of devotion, are most feelingly set forth by David in his Penitential Psalms, which abound with expressions of this nature.¶ The apostle calls it a crucifying of the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.** Whoever attains to this state, in him verily Christ lives, and he reciprocally in

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. † Phil. ii. 12. ‡ Matt. vii. 13.
§ Luke xiv. 26. ‖ Rom. vi. 2. ¶ Psal. vi. xxxviii, &c.
** Gal. v. 24.

Christ by faith. Then Christ conquers and reigns in man, whose faith is become "the victory that overcometh the world." *

But since the world, which thou art to strive against, is not without thee, but within thee, it follows, that it is also to be conquered not without, but within thee. For what is the world, but "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?" † As these are in thee, so in thee they are to be subdued, that hence thou mayest worthily bear the name and character of a true child of God. "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world;" ‡ and if thou overcomest, and gainest the victory over, thy great enemy the world, thou art then entitled to the greatest of dignities, being a child of light, ‖ a sheep of Christ, § and the temple of the Holy Ghost. ¶ Thou art now a good tree, ** that freely and without constraint, yea, with joy, love, and pleasure, bringeth forth fruit to the glory of God.

But if thou livest in Adam, and Adam reigns in thee, then thou art not a son of God, nor begotten of him. For since thou art overcome by the world, and since the prince thereof rules in thee by his pride, ambition, and self-love, thou art on this very account to be numbered amongst the children of the devil. †† "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." ‡‡ And, on the contrary, as many as are led by Satan, they likewise are his children; yea, they are the very members of Satan, sons of darkness, a habitation of unclean spirits, an accursed Babylon, full of impure and of abominable beasts;

* 1 John, v. 4.
† 1 John, ii. 16.
‡ 1 John, v. 4.
‖ Eph. v. 8.
§ John, x. 27.
¶ 1 Cor. vi. 19.
** Matt. xii. 33.
†† John, viii. 44.
‡‡ Rom. viii. 14.

as it is represented by the ancient prophets;* but particularly by the prophet Ezekiel. He being brought in spirit into the temple at Jerusalem, beheld two remarkable things: one whereof was, "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about;" and secondly, which was still more detestable, "seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, worshipping these beasts and images, and offering them incense." †

Behold, O man, a lively representation of thy adamical, brutish, and beastly heart! If thou wilt but enter into this temple of thy heart, thou shalt surely find therein vast numbers of foul, detestable creatures, images, and idols, fashioned and represented by all manner of corrupt and impure thoughts in the carnal mind, imagination, and memory. Moreover, (and this is the greatest evil of all,) though these idols and horrid abominations should be utterly banished from the heart, and this detestable evil by which man is made the habitation of unclean and pestilential vermin, should be destroyed by repentance, by mortification of the flesh, and by penitential tears and humiliation; yet instead of doing that, thou lovest these serpents, adorest these vile monsters, and servest and caressest them. Alas! thou but little regardest that Christ is cast out of thy soul by these abominations, and is utterly banished from thy heart: and that by this means thou deprivest thyself of the supreme and eternal good, losing the Holy Spirit with all his excellent gifts and graces.

Miserable man! thou exceedingly grievest when any outward trouble befals thee, or when

* Isaiah, xiii. 21. † Ezek. viii. 10, 11.

thou losest any thing in the world that is dear to thee: what stupidity is it, then, that thou art not at all concerned at the loss even of CHRIST himself, and at the deplorable state of thy soul and body, which are both become a habitation of malignant spirits! If these things be seriously pondered and laid to heart, we shall soon understand what Adam and Christ are; and how they live and act in men. To this head we may also refer the following observations.

First, In Adam we are ALL naturally equal, nor is one better than another; since we are all, both as to body and soul, equally polluted and corrupted, so that it may be affirmed, not only of Jews and Gentiles, but even of all men in general, "there is no difference."* Hence it is also true, that in the sight of God, no man is better than the most profligate criminal. For though that perverse temper which is natural to all, does not equally in all break out into works; yet God judges all men by the inward state of the heart, that poisoned fountain of all sin. Nor is there any sin so horrid, which man by nature would not freely commit, were he not strongly restrained by divine grace. For by the bent of our nature we are but too much inclined to pollute ourselves with all manner of wickedness: † and if the inclination be not always attended with the external effect itself, it is wholly to be attributed to the grace of God, and not to any strength of our own, or to any human precaution whatsoever. ‡ This consideration should excite us to the practice of true humility, and to an unfeigned fear of God; and at the same time restrain us from rashly despising our fellow-creatures, lest, by reflecting

* Rom. iii. 22. † Jer. xiii. 23. ‡ Gen. xx. 6.

on others, we ourselves split upon the dangerous rock of carnal presumption.

Secondly, It is proper to observe, that as in Adam we are all equally bad with regard to the corruption of nature; so by Christ we are all made equally just and holy; no man receiving for himself any prerogative of a peculiar righteousness in the sight of God. For since Christ is our perfection, our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," * we, who in *Adam* are alike, are also alike in *Christ*. For as in *Adam* by nature we are all one man and one body, infected with the highest contagion of disobedience and sin; so all true Christians are as one man in *Christ*, and make up one body, completely purified and sanctified by faith, and the blood of Christ. †

This doctrine, as I have already said, is a remedy against *spiritual pride*, that none may account himself better before God than others, though perhaps adorned with greater gifts, and endowments. But even these are no less bestowed on him of pure grace, than are righteousness and salvation themselves. Upon this principle of pure grace, be careful to keep thy mind constantly fixed. If thou dost so, then this grace shall protect thee against the dangerous snares of pride and arrogance: and as on the one hand, it will convince thee of thy own misery and *poverty in spirit*; so on the other it will give thee a most lively insight into Christ, and into the exceeding *riches of grace*, derived through him on mankind.

* 1 Cor. i. 30. † 1 Cor. vi. 11.

CHAPTER VIII.

Motives to Repentance.

GOD, who is of infinite mercy, in order that he might the better soften our hard and stony hearts, and turn them from the world, ourselves, and the devil, unto himself, has in his Word variously represented and set before our eyes man's conversion and repentance.*

Among other ways of impressing it on our minds, the two parables of the *lost sheep*, and of the *lost son*,† are exceedingly remarkable, and are so abundant in divine consolation, that it is scarce possible seriously to think upon them without tears. Therein our Saviour lays down a most lively description of three different hearts. Of these the first is, the impenitent heart of a sinner; the second, the contrite heart of a penitent; the third, the heart of God yearning with paternal affection.

The *first* he describes under the similitude of a degenerate son, wastefully spending his substance and inheritance, and at last reduced to such necessity, as to wish to fill his belly with the husks which the swine do eat. By this figure all mankind in their natural state are shadowed forth; who, as so many degenerate sons, have squandered away the heavenly inheritance by continual riot and wickedness. That is, they have made ship-

* Acts, xxvi. 18. † Luke, xv. 11.

wreck of righteousness, holiness, innocency, and of the most beautiful image of God, in which they were at first created, and are now by their own fault become the bond-slaves of the vilest affections of the devil, and of death. And to complete their ruin, finding no relief, rest, or comfort, in any human performances and laws, (which answer to the husks in the parable) they must of necessity perish with endless famine and misery, unless they speedily have recourse unto the grace of their heavenly Father.

The *second* heart, which is that of a repenting sinner, is set forth in these words: "How many hired servants of my Father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee; and am no more worthy to be called thy son." In which account we have a very moving description of true repentance. By the prodigal's coming to himself, is signified contrition of spirit; that is, when a man, on one hand, reflects upon his own misery, and considers how, from being a son of God, he is become a brute beast, * an unclean swine, † a man void of reason, earthly and sensual: and on the other, mindful of his divine origin, turns his thoughts entirely upon his Father, repents, acknowledges his offences, and says, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee;" and have offended both God and man. This he immediately confirms by a holy disdain and contempt of himself, expressed in these words: "and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Moreover, *faith*, the other part of repentance, is exhibited to us in his resolution

* 2 Pet. ii. 12. † Matt. vii. 6.

to *arise* and to return to his father's house. He assumed confidence to repair home, and firmly persuaded himself that his father would receive him, if not as a son, at least as one of his hired servants. "For," says he, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants." Which plainly shews the strong hope he entertained, that his father would yield to his intreaties, and receive him into his favour at last.

And now I come to draw the character of the paternal heart of God, set forth in the parable:

1. *When the degenerate son was yet a great way off, his father saw him.* Behold the preventing mercy of our heavenly Father, looking upon a profligate son with an endearing glance of his eye. *

2. *And was moved with compassion:* hereby is represented his mercy waiting to be gracious to us. †

3. *And ran and fell on his neck:* Here is mercy receiving into favour.

4. *And kissed him:* This exhibits mercy ready to administer consolation to the returning sinner. ‡

5. *Bring forth,* says he, *the best robe, and put it on him:* ‖ This has relation to Christ, and points out his gratuitous righteousness, and *justifying* mercy. §

6. *And put a ring on his hand:* Hereby is signified the Holy Spirit, the earnest of the inheritance, ¶ the pledge of sonship, ** the seal of intimate favour and union; and it also represents to us the espousing mercy of the Lord.

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* Psalm, xxxii. 8. † Isaiah, xxx. 18. Rom. x. 21.
‡ Micah, vii. 19. Isaiah, lxvi. 13. ‖ Isaiah, lxi. 10.
§ Rom. viii. 33. ¶ Eph. i. 14. ** Gal. iv. 6.

7. *And shoes on his feet:* This denotes a new and holy life in Christ, resulting from the Divine power, and the grace of the Holy Spirit; which are the peculiar effects of confirming mercy.*

8. *Bring hither the fatted calf:* By this feast is represented the joy of angels, or rejoicing and *crowning* mercy, described by the holy Psalmist, and the prophet Isaiah.†

What strong and endearing arguments are here offered by the goodness of God inviting us to sincere repentance! Let us, then, seriously consider some of the main *inducements* to true repentance, of which seven shall be proposed at present.

1. The boundless mercy of God.
2. The kindness of Christ, and his inestimable merit.
3. The dreadful threatenings and punishments that are laid before us.
4. Death.
5. The last judgment.
6. Hell torments. And,
7. Everlasting joy.

I. THE MERCY OF GOD.

"But if thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee; even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them.‡ What tender affection, as

* 1 Pet. i. 5. Psalm, lxxxiv. 11.
† Psalm, lxiii. 3.—ciii. 4. Isaiah, lxiii. 15.—lxvi. 13.
‡ Deut. iv. 29.

of the heart of a father, have we here presented to us! And how just and reasonable is it, that it should move us to repentance! For how numerous and *great* soever our sins be, the mercy of God is still *greater* to forgive them, according to that of the Psalmist: "With the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption." * And again: "According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions." †

Nor are our sins so *filthy* and abominable, but God can make them whiter than snow. "Though your sins," says the Prophet, "be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." ‡ And the Psalm: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." ‖ Neither are they so various and *manifold*, but that they are surpassed by the riches of divine grace, according to the Apostle: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins; according to the riches of his grace." § And what we read in Exodus confirms the same: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." ¶ Nor are they so strong and powerful, but God can destroy them, and throw them into the depth of the sea, as he did Pharaoh with all his host. ** Nor, finally, are they so mortal and pestilential, but God can heal them, as the Prophet assures us: "The wicked shall not fall by his wickedness in the day that he turneth from it." ††

II. THE KINDNESS OF CHRIST.

How kindly and affectionately Christ Jesus

* Psalm, cxxx. 7. † Psalm, li. 1. ‡ Isaiah, i. 18.
‖ Psalm, li. 7. § Eph. i. 7. ¶ Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.
** Micah, vii. 19. †† Ezek. xxxiii. 12.

receives sinners, he himself abundantly declares in the Gospel: "They that be whole," says he, "need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." * "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." † Of this gracious bounty of Christ towards returning sinners, the Prophets have left us many endearing predictions: "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel," saith Ezekiel, "who have not sought that which was lost: but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled over them. And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd. Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." ‡ And the Prophet Isaiah says: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." ‖

Nor should only the *gracious nature* of Christ move thee to repentance; but more especially his extreme *sorrow*, and most innocent blood shed on thine account. Only consider within thyself:

1. That he laid down his life, not for heaven or earth, but for thy soul: And wilt thou not cease by sin and impenitence, shamefully to squander away so great and valuable a treasure?

2. Remember, that thou couldest not have been redeemed by any other or less price than the precious blood of Christ: And why shouldest thou

* Matt. ix. 12, 13. † Luke, xix. 10.
‡ Exek. xxxiv. 2, 4, 11, 14, 16. ‖ Isaiah, xl. 11.

deprive thyself of a ransom so inestimable as the Redeemer has paid for thee?

3. Call to mind, that Christ has redeemed thee *from* the world, *from* sin and the devil; and dost thou desire to continue longer in the service of so hard and cruel a master?

4. Assure thyself, that without unfeigned repentance, the merit of Christ will avail thee nothing, and that thou tramplest under foot his blood, and dost "despite unto the Spirit of grace." *

5. Lastly, consider, how sharp and cruel were the sufferings which thy Saviour underwent on thy account! How he wept and sorrowed, trembled and feared: How grievously "he was wounded for our transgressions, † and, at last, as a worm, ‡ and cursed, ‖ hung upon a tree!

III. THREATS OF TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT.

"God judgeth the righteous," saith the Psalmist, "and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword: He hath bent his bow, and made it ready: He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death: He ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." § This wrath and revenge, no man certainly will ever be able to escape, as the prophet Amos affirms: "He that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. Though they climb up to heaven, thence I will bring them down: and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the Serpent, and he shall bite them. Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth." ¶ Their blood

* Heb. x. 29.
† Isaiah, liii. 5.
‡ Psalm, xxii. 6.
‖ Gal. iii. 13.
§ Psalm, vii, 11, 12, 13.
¶ Amos, ix. 1, 2, 3, 8.

shall be poured out as dust," saith Zephaniah, "and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver, nor their gold, shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy."* Such terrible threatenings as these should awaken us to an unfeigned sense of repentance; this being the only means by which to prevent the impending desolation of the earth, and the total destruction of nations and cities; as evidently appears from the example of Nineveh. † "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." ‡

IV. DEATH.

God has the time of our death concealed from us, that thereby we may be kept in the daily and uninterrupted practice of true repentance, as not knowing but that every day may be our last. "The whole life of a man is given him for repentance," saith St. Bernard. And this repentance is a Christian's daily cross and tribulation. Thus it is said in the Psalms: "I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me." ‖ God, who has promised grace to the penitent, has not promised to sinners another day in which to repent. "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the Judgment." § Such as God shall find thee, such will he judge thee: wherefore, live in such a manner as thou wouldest wish to have done when thou comest to be confined to thy

* Zeph. i. 17, 18. † John, iii. 5, 10. ‡ Jer. xviii. 7.
‖ Psalm, xxxviii. 17. § Heb. ix. 27.

death-bed. Revolve seriously in thy mind, where they now are, who but a few years ago wasted their lives with lust and vanity, and freely enjoyed the "good things" of this world? * They are all "gone to their own place," † where they wait for the publication of their last sentence. Wherefore, "come out of Babylon, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." ‡

V. THE LAST JUDGMENT.

After death, there is neither place nor time for repentance. It is in this world that eternal life is either lost or obtained. Those that repent betimes, shall not be condemned in judgment; but those that will not be argued out of the confident dream they indulge concerning their good state, shall be thunderstruck at last with that dreadful sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." ‖ "Behold, therefore, now is the accepted time: Behold, now is the day of salvation!" § which will be followed by the day of judgment in the other world. "To-day, therefore, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation; lest I swear in my wrath, that you shall not enter into my rest." ¶ For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that "every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad." ** Those, therefore, who make here a great progress in the change of their souls, "shall have their sins covered," and "they shall no more be mentioned unto them," †† as the Prophet declares. ‡‡ Lay hold, therefore,

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* Luke, xvi. 25. † Acts, i. 25. ‡ Rev. xviii. 4.
‖ Matt. xxv. 41. § 2 Cor. vi. 2.
¶ Psalm, xcv. 7, 8, 11. Heb. iii. 7, 8, 11.
** 2 Cor. v. 10. †† Psalm, xxii. 1. ‡‡ Ezek. xxxiii. 16.

on the tender of mercy betimes, and confess thy sins, O man, that they may be remitted and blotted out.

VI. HELL TORMENTS.

With this present life, the time of the gracious visitation of God closes. It will then be said: "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things."* Thy life is now past, gone, and expired. Thou art now dead! Dead to God for ever, to whom thou didst refuse to live in time. Sad and unhappy change indeed! For how should the damned enjoy the goodness of God, to which they were dead whilst they were alive, and to which they will now continue dead to all eternity! Remember, therefore, that now is the only time for mercy, and the hour of visitation to repent: whereas, there the damned so die; as, notwithstanding, always to live; and so live, as yet to die eternally. All the senses that have been pampered here, and prostituted to sin and sensuality, shall there undergo most exquisite pains and torments. The sight shall be punished with most horrible darkness; the ears shall be filled with howling and gnashing of teeth; the smelling with stench of fire and brimstone: the taste with the bitterness of gall, and a constant death; and, finally, the feeling, with a sense of endless tortures and miseries.

VII. EVERLASTING HAPPINESS.

Is it not a very high degree of madness, to prefer a short perishing pleasure, to an eternal joy; and a worthless trifle, to the glorious presence of God? Now none shall enter into this, but he who has thoroughly washed himself, and "made white

* Luke, xvi. 25.

his robes in the blood of the Lamb."* For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." † None of those, who having been here invited to the feast of Christ, yet refused to come, "shall taste of his supper." ‡ The highest joy, and the whole reward of eternal life, will consist in "seeing God as he is." ‖ "You shall see me," says our Lord, "and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you." § This sight of the face of God, is the joy of the angels themselves: it is their life, their bread, and the invisible food by which they are sustained. But as this vision of the glorious countenance of God, gives the most transcendent satisfaction that can be conceived; so to be banished from it, is to suffer the greatest, the most terrible, and the most exquisite torment possible.

CHAPTER IX.

Of Repentance; its nature, manner, and cause.

THE Lord, whose mercy is infinite, by no means seeks our destruction, but our life and happiness. He best knows the wretched and deplorable condition into which we are fallen by sin; and he is also desirous to reclaim us from that dangerous state, and to preserve us from everlasting ruin. It is for this reason, he so ear-

* Rev. iii. 14. † Rev. xxii. 15. ‡ Luke, xiv. 24.
‖ 1 John, iii. 2. § John, xvi. 19, 22.

nestly invites the soul to repentance, and engages us to the same by many strong and powerful motives.

Sometimes God is pleased to stir us up by terrible *threatenings:* "Behold," says he, "I will bring evil upon this people; because they have not hearkened unto my words nor to my law, but rejected it."* Again, "and now because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; therefore, will I cast you out of my sight."† This dreadful denunciation of both temporal and eternal calamities, should strike fear and terror into us: for the threatening of God is not an empty voice, nor a sound that vanishes into nothing, but it is accompanied with many terrible effects, and consuming wrath, as will in its time more fully appear, and which we even feel already by sad experience; since miseries and calamities, like a flood, seem to carry all before them. Nay, they will undoubtedly multiply upon us, and exert themselves with the utmost fury and fierceness, except we betimes prevent them by a sincere repentance. Thus the wrath of God shall be poured forth in wars, famines, pestilence, fire, and inundations, till he has at length destroyed our very *foundations*, as he did once to the city of Jerusalem.‡

But if the denunciation of wrath and judgments cannot prevail upon us, yet ought his abounding *goodness*, attended as it is with so many endearing marks of love, to melt down our hearts, and to soften them into true and earnest repentance. For thus hath the Lord expressed

* Jer. vi. 19. † Jer. vii. 13, 15. ‡ Lam. iv. 11.

himself by the Prophet: "Return thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God."* In these words, God makes a most ready offer of his grace, intreats and adjures us to return to him again, being willing to accept our repentance.

The passages that have been quoted, are a convincing proof that God, by his grace, mercy, patience, and clemency, strongly invites us to true repentance. There are chiefly three things in those scriptures which deserve a more particular observation: the *nature* of repentance, or what it is to repent; namely, to *turn unto the Lord:*—the *manner* in which repentance is to be wrought out; viz. *by fasting, weeping, and mourning:*—the *motive* to engage us in so holy an exercise, which is the paternal goodness of God; "*for I am merciful.*"

As to the *first*, we know that to repent, is nothing else but, from the law of God, to acknowledge the natural blindness of our hearts, and that detestable impurity which lurks within. Next, we ought to regard this as the very source whence all other sins proceed, and whereby we depart from God, the supreme and eternal good, deserving not only various punishments here, but also his everlasting wrath in the flames of hell hereafter.

These things seriously called to mind, will prove as so many monitors, to incite us to lament from our hearts the deplorable crookedness of our nature: and this, not so much from any *fear* of the punishment we have deserved, as from an

* Jer. iii. 12.

inward sense of the heinousness of the many provocations offered to a merciful Father, who in his very nature is love and kindness. This being done, we may then raise again our souls by virtue of the Gospel, and with a well-grounded faith, rely on the favour of God, and on the sure remission of sin promised in Christ Jesus. This will necessarily be attended with a serious amendment of life, with a constant purification of the heart by faith, with a mortification of all evil desires, and with a sincere abnegation of our own will, so opposite to that of God. In a word, it will be accompanied with a new life acceptable unto God in Christ, which will bring forth fruit worthy of repentance; suitably to what God enjoins by the Prophet: "Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."*

But alas! here is the difficulty! These things are much more easily said, than reduced to practice. The reason is, because hardly any will earnestly engage in so weighty a work, or search into the true original cause of the many dreadful disorders that appear in our lives and conduct. Every one flatters himself into a confident opinion of the goodness of his religion, and cherishes the affections of the old man, under an empty show of godliness. Alas! how few are there now, that care to see their hearts in its inward and native depravity; or to be made sensible of that vein of evil nature which runs through all, even their best and most shining actions. People are too well pleased with themselves, and do not like to be over-nice and scrupulous about their eternal

* Isaiah, i. 16, 18.

concerns. They are not at all suspicious of any false step they may take in so important a matter, nor will they have their inward corruptions laid open, or too narrowly inspected. And this is the reason, that even Christ himself, and the grace of God, manifested by him are so little regarded in these unhappy days.

However, the Prophet is certainly of another mind, when he charges us to "turn unto God with all our heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." Hereby he intimates that we are turned away from God; have forsaken the fountain of living waters;* and are now unable to attain life and happiness again, unless we "*search* our ways," and "*return*" unto him from whom we are gone astray.† It is for this purpose the Prophet charges "backsliding children" to return, with the promise annexed, that the "Lord will heal their backslidings."‡ For this verily is the will of God, that we on the one hand freely confess our misery, in order that he on the other, may compassionately heal it.

But since by nature, we are so blind as to be utterly unable of ourselves, sufficiently to discover our own fall and wretchedness; God has been pleased to afford means, with a view to bringing us to a sound knowledge of ourselves. This is done by his Word and Sacrament, which being duly applied, will always be accompanied with his grace and Spirit. By these the Father *draws*, allures, and calls us to himself, as so many lost and wandering sheep.‖ As a straying sheep cannot of itself return, but must of necessity be sought and brought back to the fold:

* Jer. ii. 13. † Lam. iii. 40. ‡ Jer. iii. 22.
‖ John, vi. 44.

so we should for ever go astray in the wilderness of sin and error, did not God himself carefully seek us, and gather us to his church. And this the example of Peter and Paul abundantly confirms. "Turn thou me, O Lord," saith the Prophet, "and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God."* "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise."† "For it is God," says the Apostle, "which worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure."‡

As soon, therefore, as the Lord awakens us by the use of these means, and invites us to repentance, it is then our part, not to withstand the good motions of his grace and spirit; (as it is said, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;"§) but to confess the sin which he thus begins to reprove in us, and by no means make light of the grace offered us in the Gospel. Then God will assuredly have mercy upon us, as he himself declares: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."‖

Upon this account the work of conversion, though it is entirely a free gift of God, is yet in one respect ascribed to us; namely, as we *give up ourselves* to the Lord, and to his operations, and do not resist any longer his Spirit; or, as the Apostle expresses it, do not put his Word from us, nor stop our ears against it, as did the Jews of old. ¶ On the contrary, when the severity of

* Jer. xxxi. 18. † Jer. xvii. 14. ‡ Phil. ii. 13.
§ Psalm, xcv. 7. ‖ Isaiah, lv. 7.
¶ Acts, xiii. 46.—vii. 57.

the law has laid open our spiritual diseases, and we have felt the bitterness thereof; let us then step over into the dispensation of the Gospel, to have our distemper cured, and such lenitives applied, as our heavenly Physician shall think fit for the recovery of wretches so distempered.

An image of this we have in a straying sheep. If it but hear at a distance the voice of the shepherd, it starts back immediately, and returns to the flock. And how willingly would the lost sinner follow the voice of his Shepherd, if sin had not besotted him so far, as to reduce him lower than the very beasts in stupidity and dulness? Of this indeed the Prophet complains: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider"* "Shall they fall, and not arise? Shall he turn away, and not return? The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the times of their coming: but my people know not the judgment of the Lord." †

We ought, therefore, most fervently to implore the Lord, not to withdraw from us his gracious assistance, without which we must certainly go astray. For since the old adamical and corrupt nature has so deeply infected both soul and body; we, undoubtedly, have need of daily, yea hourly supplies of grace, for repressing the tyranny of sin, and for nourishing the life of God within us. The grace of God is the life of our soul, as the soul is the life of the body. And as the life of the body, without the free enjoyment of the air, must soon be extinct; so the vital flame of the inward life will speedily languish, without a daily supply

* Isaiah, i, 3. † Jer. viii. 4, 7.

of grace to support it. For this reason Solomon prayed: "The Lord our God be with us, let him not leave us, nor forsake us; that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways."*

This is a lesson which ought not to be learnt in a light and general manner, but by a close and practical application brought home to every one in particular. *Let therefore every one look into himself, and reform one man, that so all may be reformed in time.* Let us remember that comfortable exhortation, and the promise annexed thereto: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." † "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart, saith the Lord." ‡

But in order to true repentance, it is not enough to refrain only from *gross sins*, and foul visible pollutions; but the heart, whence all those evils proceed, is to be changed and purified; that so inward pride, covetousness, and luxury, with the whole crowd of sinful affections, may be mortified at last. For whilst the heart is unchanged, unreformed, and unrenewed; that is, whilst our own corrupt temper, our inward malice, wrath, hatred, enmity, revenge, lying and deceit, are quietly suffered within us; all our boasts of, and pretences to, and formalities in religion, are but mere shew and pageantry. God requires no less than a new heart, and "a new creature in Christ Jesus." ‖ No one is so holy, so good, and so thoroughly cleansed, but he will still find something in his own heart to be thrown out, to be amended and rectified. "As a fountain casteth out her waters, so Jerusalem casteth out her wickedness." § This is the *first* head, relating to

* 1 Kings, viii. 57. † Isaiah, lv. 6. ‡ Jer. xxix. 13.
‖ 2 Cor. v. 17. § Jer. vi. 7.

the nature of repentance, of which more has been said in Book I.

Let us now consider, in the second place, the *manner* of our returning to God:---"with all the heart," says the Prophet, "with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." Wretched mortals can weep floods of tears for empty and perishing goods, whilst they stand unmoved at the miserable state of their souls, and at the loss of an eternal and incorruptible inheritance! In this they are altogether unlike David, who, by his example, sets a most shining pattern of a sincere and unfeigned repentance before us.* "For the Lord looketh on the heart," † and "trieth the heart and reins."‡

What the Prophet says of fasting, is chiefly to be understood of a general fast enjoined by God to all the people. In such a fast the whole body of a nation were wont to be concerned. They publicly confessed their sins; they deplored and bewailed them; and thus humbling themselves before God, fasted both inwardly and outwardly. And in this order they begged remission of sin, and deprecated the judgments of God gathering over them. Such a general fast and public repentance as this; such a sincere conversion, prayer, faith, confession, and supplication; is the most effectual means to appease the wrath of a provoked God, and to avert his judgments from whole kingdoms and nations. This plainly appears from the history of the defeat of the other tribes of Israel, by that of Benjamin; in which the former having in two battles lost forty thousand men, they all went up and came before the Lord, with weeping and mourning, and there fasted the whole day, from morning to night. ‖

* Psalm, vi. 7.—xxxviii. 10.
† 1 Sam. xvi. 7.
‡ Psalm, vii. 9.
‖ Judges, xx. 26.

A similar illustrious example is recorded of the fast of the Ninevites: * and of the children of Israel, who, being beaten by the Philistines, kept a fast for seven days together, after Saul and Jonathan were slain in the battle. †

Such solemn *penitential fasts* were also in use in the primitive Church, when the whole multitude of Christians met together, and upon the approach of any public calamity, humbled themselves before the Lord. Not, surely, to obtain remission of sin by such performances, as so many *meritorious* acts of devotion; but by a contrite, sober, and humble heart, to appease the Lord, and to deprecate the judgments that were ready to break in upon them. And such fasts ought to have been preserved in the Church even to this day, and kept up according to their original constitution.

Fasts such as these, accompanied with true repentance, would prove an impregnable wall and fortification against all our enemies; a sovereign medicine in all pestilential and epidemical diseases; and a safeguard about all our estates and possessions. An example of this, we have in holy Job, who, whenever his children had spent any day in mirth and jollity, "offered up unto God, prayers and sacrifices for them;" ‡ and thus as it were fortified his house against the insults of wicked men and devils. It is certain, that the Lord in such public calamities looks out for such men as may oppose, like a bulwark, the torrent of his wrath ready to make a breach. "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found

* Jonah, iii. 5.
† 1 Chron. x. 12.
‡ Job, i. 4, 5.
|| Ezek. xxii. 30, 31.

none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God." We may also remember, on this occasion, the intercession of Abraham. *

Thus again the prophet Daniel made confession to God of the sins of all the people. † And the prophet Joel, in very moving terms, describes such a penitential fast: "Blow the trumpet in Sion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the people; sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, and those that suck the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." ‡ And such public fasts ought to be celebrated by the whole multitude, with ardent zeal and devotion, and not barely with the formal appearance of godliness: for it is the will of God, that every one readily confess his sins. He requires true humility, sincere repentance, and a turning to him with our whole heart. Hence the Prophet commands the "heart, and not the garments," to be rent; the latter of which was the custom of the Jews, who, at the hearing of any sad or uncommon tidings, would rend their clothes, in order to evidence thereby the inward sorrow with which they were affected. This, however, degenerating in time, like other rites, into mere formality, some being more intent upon bodily fasting, and the outward tearing of garments, than upon the inward concern of the mind thereby expressed, the Prophet here re-

* Gen. xviii. 23. † Dan. ix. 4, 5, &c. ‡ Joel, ii. 15, 16, 17.

proves them, saying, "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bullrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" *

This divine oracle explains the nature of a true fast; which is then best kept, when on the one hand we abstain from sin, subdue the wanton lusts of the flesh, and keep the old man, with all his members, under constant restraint and subjection: and on the other, when we are fervent in works of charity, in the practice of patience and mercy, and of the other virtues springing up from a contrite, sincere, and penitent heart. And it is with regard to these inward acts of humiliation, that the Prophet bids us rend our hearts. For as the wounds of the heart must necessarily be very painful; so the grief of our sins should affect us, as if our very hearts were bruised and wounded. And this "broken spirit," this "contrite heart," is that *sacrifice* which is so highly acceptable to God. † Such a heart has, by faith, obtained a due fitness to receive the influence of the grace of God, the consolations of the Holy Spirit, and the merit and blood of Jesus Christ. As a raw and massy stone cannot imbibe the oil or water poured upon it, except it be first broken

* Isaiah, lviii. 5. † Psalm, li. 17.

to pieces; so the sovereign balm of God's grace and consolation cannot comfort and quicken the heart, except it be first broken and softened into humility, that so by faith it may partake of the merit of Christ. "Not the whole, but the sick, have need of a physician."* And let no one think he belongs to Christ, unless he has first "crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts."† The blood of Christ will be of no profit to any but to those only, who embrace it with a contrite, afflicted, penitent, humble, and believing heart.

As for the *motives* to repentance, which make up the *third* head, they are thus expressed by the Prophet: "Turn unto the Lord, *for* he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." He lays down in these words, a gradual display of the manifold mercies offered to returning sinners. As if he had said, 'If you think it a small thing that I am *gracious*, then know that I am *merciful* also: if this be not enough, I am likewise *patient* and *slow to anger:* if this will not yet suffice, then I am, moreover, of GREAT KINDNESS. If, after all, you still require something more, then understand, for your full satisfaction and encouragement, that I easily repent of intended punishments; yea, even when my avenging hand is lifting up, I am ready to let fall the rod, upon your serious repentance.'

First then, the Prophet calls God *gracious;* that is, ready to be intreated and reconciled. God is easy to be prevailed with, forgives offences, deals not in strict justice, and the rigour of the law, according to what we have deserved.‡ And all these endearing marks of mercy should induce

* Matt. ix. 12. † Gal. v. 24. ‡ Psalm, ciii. 8.

us to repentance. There are many admirable promises, all tending to the same end. "If you afflict them, they will cry unto me, and I will surely hear; for I am gracious."* "Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you. Thou shalt weep no more; he will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee."† That is, the Most High is so rich in grace, that he waits for you. In him there is *expecting grace*, by which he readily receives those that truly return: *preventing grace*, expressed by the Psalmist—"Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us:"‡ *protecting grace*, noticed by the same Prophet; "He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about:"‖ *persevering grace*—"Surely," says David, "mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."§ Of this we have examples in the preceding chapter. With this agrees also that scripture; "With the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption."¶ And this divine clemency should surely be a powerful incitement to sincere and unfeigned repentance.

Secondly, the Prophet declares that God is *merciful*. To be *merciful*, is to be easily moved by the miseries of another, and even from the very heart to compassionate his case. This is to be seen in parents, who, not only with passionate tenderness love their children, but are at the same time so deeply touched with their misery and weakness, as to be willing even to die for them, if that were possible. This appears in David, when he lamented the death of his son Absalom in that pathetic manner: "O my son

* Exod. xxii. 23, 27. † Isa. xxx. 18. ‡ Ps. lxxix. 8.
‖ Ps. xxxii. 10. § Ps. xxiii. 6. ¶ Ps. cxxx. 7.

Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"* But these bowels of mercy, this ardent, cordial, and tender affection, are infinitely more conspicuous in God himself, who, from an abounding sense of love and kindness, has given up his son to death, and thereby transcended all the affections of all earthly parents whatsoever. This is declared by the Prophet: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may, yet will not I forget thee."† And by another, "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."‡ And again by another, "The Lord thy God is a merciful God; he will not forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them."‖ And the royal Prophet confirms it; "The Lord is merciful and gracious."§ And again, calling to mind this mercy, when of three punishments he had it in his power to choose which he pleased, he answered, "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great."¶ And would to God that these bowels of a goodness so paternal, might also allure us to unfeigned repentance! St. Paul himself recommends this as the most powerful inducement, when he beseeches us "by the *mercies* of God," &c.**

The third appellation given to God by the Prophet is, that he is patient, or *slow to anger*.

* 2 Sam. xviii. 33. † Isa. xlix. 15. ‡ Jer. xxxi. 20.
‖ Deut. iv. 31. § Ps. ciii. 8. ¶ 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.
** Rom. xii. 1.

He is not easily moved to wrath; he suffers many provocations offered him, and gives time for repentance and conversion. All which he has abundantly evidenced by many real demonstrations, powerful enough to convince us, that even in God himself, "Charity beareth all things, endureth all things,"* even as parents bear with their tender children, till they attain a fuller ripeness of years. To this purpose says Saint Peter, "The Lord is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."† And again, "Account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation."‡ And Paul wishes, that "the goodness of God may lead us to repentance."‖ To this long-suffering of God it was entirely due, that he granted the old world a hundred and twenty years in which to repent; bearing all that time with their enormous provocations, and waiting for repentance.§ And O! how much time hath he given us to repent in, and to work out our salvation? But this divine grace is abused by those who only grow more wanton by mercies, and "turn even the grace of God itself into lasciviousness."¶ But by this they but hasten their just ruin, and render more grievous the punishment which they deserve. If but one of these many and provoking affronts, with which men offend an omnipotent God, were daily put upon an impotent mortal, nothing certainly could be expected, but the utmost severity of his resentment. How inconceivably great then must be the patience of God, who not only pardons offences so numerous and so heinous, but also re-

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7. † 2 Pet. iii. 9. ‡ 2 Pet. iii. 15.
‖ Rom. ii. 4. § Gen. vi. 3. ¶ Jude, ver. 4.

turns all manner of kindness to the offender himself. And, O! that the immense patience of the Lord might inspire us with a hatred of sin, and guard us for ever from attempting the like again!

Fourthly, God is represented to be *of great kindness;* so great indeed, that no sin, how great soever, can surpass it. For as God is essentially and wholly good, so is he desirous to communicate himself wholly to men, provided they be but willing to receive and admit him. Yea, by his nature he can do nothing but good. He takes a pleasure therein, and "rejoiceth over us to do us good."* His mercy is as great as himself, that is, infinite. It extends to all mankind. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens."† "As the heaven is high above the earth; so great is his mercy toward them that fear him."‡ And in the Lamentations: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not: they are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."‖ See, therefore, O man! that a goodness so inexpressible be no longer abused, but that it animate thee to sincere repentance.

And lastly, the Prophet says of the Lord, "*He repenteth him of the evil.*" This is as if the Lord would say: "It is the nature of God, to punish with reluctance; and when he is even constrained, it is not for our destruction, but salvation, that we be not "condemned with the world."§ He then doth "his strange work (of punishment), that he may bring to pass his own work" (of mercy).¶ Thus he repented of

* Jer. xxxii. 41. † Ps. xxxvi. 5. ‡ Ps. ciii. 11.
‖ Lam. iii. 22. § 1 Cor. xi. 32. ¶ Isa. xxviii. 21.

the evil he had designed against Nineveh.* And, therefore, "it is good, that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men."†

Do this, therefore, O men: work out repentance; and then believe, that as soon as thou repentest of sin, and supplicatest the Lord in true faith, God will also repent of the punishment he intended to inflict. The words of the Lord to Jonah are very memorable: "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons?"‡ This boundless mercy is still the same even at this day, and will continue so for ever to penitent and returning sinners. Go, therefore, O man, and answer this overflowing mercy of God with suitable returns of love and repentance!

CHAPTER X.

Of Four Properties of true Repentance.

"I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indig-

* Jonah, iii. 10. † Lam. iii. 26, 31—33. ‡ Jonah, iv. 9—11.

nation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down. My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations."* In these words are enumerated *four practical properties* of true conversion enjoined on a sinner that repents. The *first* is, *to account himself unworthy of all the mercies of God.* This is contained in these words: "I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping:" that is, there is nothing I can take any more delight in, and I account myself unworthy of any good or delicious fare. This, however pleasing it may be to the palate of others, is not more savoury to me than mere ashes. The same regard to our own unworthiness is thus inculcated by the Lord: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."† And, "if any man come to me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be my disciple."‡ Herein is expressed a threefold reference which a true Christian ought to have to his own unworthiness.

First then, he commands him to *deny himself:* that is, to die to *self-will*, to *self-love*, and *self-honour*, esteeming himself utterly unworthy of any of the benefits derived by God on other men; or judging himself not "worthy of the least of all the mercies" of God.‖ In fine, reputing himself the most inconsiderable, not only of all men, but even of all other creatures; after the example of Christ, who said: "I am a worm, and no man."§ In this manner, for a man to despise himself, is truly to *deny himself.*

* Psalm, cii. 9, &c. † Luke, ix. 23. ‡ Luke, xiv. 26.
‖ Gen. xxxii. 10. § Psalm, xxii. 6.

He commands him, *secondly*, to *hate himself*: that is, to condemn in himself whatever is pleasing and acceptable to the flesh; as honour, luxury, revenge, anger, avarice, and whatever else savours of the flesh. He is to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and to abhor in himself its whole offspring, as the work of the devil himself, tending only to increase and nourish the perverse seed of original depravity. And such self-abhorrence in a sinner, will then of necessity be followed by pleading *guilty*, and by looking upon himself as the vilest cast-away and reprobate that ever existed.

The third lesson enjoined in these words, consists in *taking up the cross, and in following the Lord:* that is, that we, not with a morose and discontented, but with a chearful and ready mind, bear all manner of sufferings, and deem ourselves worthy, not only of these, but even of far more grievous afflictions. Thus Christ himself, whose example is set before us, "endured the cross, and despised the shame," thereby teaching us, that in "quietness and confidence shall be our strength."* And all that is comprehended in the imitation of or following after Christ. Upon the whole, these things may make it appear, that a soul truly humble and penitent, thinks himself unworthy of all divine benefits, and even of the daily food and refreshment by which he is sustained. And this after the example of Christ himself, who, parched with thirst on the cross, and having vinegar given him mixed with gall, said no more, than, "it is finished."† This was the reason also, that the true penitents under the old law judged themselves entirely unworthy of

* Isaiah, xxx. 15. † John, xix. 30.

any good thing. They put sackcloth on their skin, and sat in the dust. They satisfied their hunger with bread spread with ashes, and quenched their thirst with water mingled with tears; as a testimony that they did not deserve any cleaner or better food, but merited rather to eat and to drink with their food, the very tears that trickled upon it.

Now the *cause* of this great self-abasement, was that profound sense with which they were affected, not only on account of their sin, but also of that just condemnation which unavoidably follows a dissolute course of life. This consideration lays the returning sinner very low. He deems himself utterly unworthy even of the least of the benefits of God with respect both to body and soul. An elegant type of this we have in Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. When David was raised to the royal dignity, he called to mind the kindness of his friend Jonathan, who formerly had delivered him out of the hand of his father Saul; and commanding search to be made, whether there remained any of Jonathan's family, to whom he might make a suitable return of thanks; he at last found Mephibosheth, a lame and miserable man, who being ordered by David to eat bread at the king's table, bowed himself, and burst forth into these moving words: "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?"* This is an illustrious pattern, indeed, of a soul truly contrite in spirit, and penitent in heart, and, therefore, sensible of both his own unworthiness, and of all the mercies bestowed on him by the Lord. And truly we may, with far greater reason, make use

* 2 Sam. ix. 8.

of the same humble speech, whenever God vouchsafes us, as it were, the food of his own table, or in the blessed communion, feasts us with his own flesh and blood.

In like manner does the Prodigal Son, after his happy return, express his sorrowful mind to his Father: "Father," says he, "I am now no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." * And the woman of Canaan was even content to be called a dog, if she were but permitted to enjoy the portion of a dog, and to "eat of the crumbs falling from the master's table." † And Peter says to the Lord: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man!" ‡ that is, not worthy that thou shouldest have any further converse with me. And the Centurion of Capernaum was of the same mind: "Lord," says he, "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." ‖ So also St. Paul professes himself "not meet to be called an apostle:" § and declares, that he "counted not his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy." ¶ And this inward sense of self-abasement David expresses by "eating ashes like bread, and mingling his drink with weeping." If the heart of a Christian be brought to a sense of this vileness, then it is truly contrite and humble, and fit to be made a living sacrifice unto the Lord. **

A *second* property of true repentance, is, *to grieve at nothing so much as at the offences offered to God himself.* This is intimated in these words: "Because of thine indignation and thy wrath, for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down." That is, of all my other miseries and griefs, the greatest and most insupportable, is the sense I

* Luke, xv. 19. † Matt. xv. 27. ‡ Luke, v. 8.
‖ Matt. viii. 8. § 1 Cor. xv. 9. ¶ Acts, xx. 24.
** Psalm, li. 19.

have of my having so heinously offended the infinitely good, holy, and righteous God. And truly, since God is nothing but love, grace, righteousness, goodness, and mercy, yea, the original source of all virtue, it is certain, that *God must of necessity be offended with every sin* committed by men; since the nature of sin is directly opposite to the nature of God. Thus by unrighteousness, the *righteousness* of God is offended, he being righteousness itself. By lying, the *truth* of God is offended, he being truth itself. By hatred the love of God is offended, he being love itself. In a word, since God is the perfection of all virtue, goodness, and love, it can be no other than *diabolical* malice to offend such infinite goodness, such immense love, nay, *Love* itself. Had he at any time injured us, it would be no such great wonder, if by a reciprocal hatred, we offended him in our turn: but now, that he gives us nothing but what is good,—soul, body, and life itself; that he feeds and clothes us; that he cures our body when it is sick; yea, pardons our sin when we pour out to him our souls; is ready to receive us into favour, as often as we return; now that he has given us his only Son with the Holy Spirit, yea, and himself too, and adopted us into the number of his children: and having done all this for men, to be yet offended, opposed, and hated by them, is an impudence, a madness, a malice altogether unaccountable and monstrous.

Would it not be highly horrid and impious to kill him, who gave thee life; to beat and wound him, who kindly embraced and cherished thee in his bosom; to insult and affront him, who heaped honours and dignities upon thee; and to disown and reject him, who had chosen thee for his son? But all these, and far greater indignities, thou of-

ferest to thy heavenly Father, to the supreme, the righteous, the holy God, whom angels adore trembling, and whom seraphim worship with the acclamations of "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"* though thou, who art but dust and ashes, art not afraid to offend him. If a penitent man earnestly calls to mind this monstrous, this prodigious injury, it is impossible but he must be affected with an exquisite sorrow of heart, and feel the smart of his wounded conscience to equal and even exceed that of a wounded body. And there is all the reason in the world why it should be so. For hence must necessarily arise a dread and terror, *inwardly* threatening the conscience with wrath and judgment, and *outwardly* setting before it the approach of temporal and dismal calamities: whence a man, like Job, finds no rest, takes no delight in any thing, loathing even his meat and drink. These terrible pangs of conscience are noticed by David: "Thine arrows," says he, "stick fast in me: and thy hand presseth me sore."† For as a wound grievously smarts and grows worse whilst the arrow remains fixed in it; so also it is with the conscience, whilst the sting of sin and judgment is not taken away.‡ And these lashes and clamours hurrying a penitent soul, proceed from nothing but the sentence of divine justice proclaimed in the conscience, and the terrors of hell and death attending it. Therefore, David exclaims, "thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down:" like one thrown down from a lofty rock into a low valley, whose bones and limbs must be dreadfully broken and maimed.

* Isaiah, vi. 3. † Ps. xxxviii. 2. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 56.

But how terrible soever the fear of the judgments of God may prove to an awakened conscience, yet is there some ground of comfort; since the Prophet tells us, that these arrows, these threats, these terrors, are the arrows and terrors of GOD himself. And it is God, who having thereby wounded and broken the heart, heals and restores it again. It is HE that killeth, and it is He that maketh alive; He boweth down, and He raiseth again;* He bringeth down to the gates of hell, and He bringeth up again.† Whosoever, therefore, accounts and feels nothing more bitter and grievous, than to have *offended God*, the infinite good, and Love itself; he, and he only has experimentally learned the doctrine of *contrition*, and laid a firm foundation for sound and substantial piety. This was one of David's acts of repentance: "Against THEE," says he, "Thee only, have I sinned."‡ As if he had said, "This is my only trouble, this is my anguish and sorrow, that I have offended THEE." And Daniel thus expresses himself: "Lord, righteousness belongeth unto THEE, but unto us, confusion of face," because we have offended so righteous a God.‖

The *third* property of repentance is contained in these words: "My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass." That is, a heart truly penitent, is deeply sensible of its own weakness. It entirely despairs of its own strength and ability, knowing itself to be as destitute of life and power, as the very shadow; and as empty of spirit and moisture, as the grass that fadeth away. The same is affirmed in another

* Ps. cxlvi. 8. † 1 Sam. ii. 6. ‡ Psalm, li. 4.
‖ Dan. ix. 7.

Psalm: "Behold, thou hast made my days as a hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily, every man in his best estate is altogether vanity."* O! how noble a step would it be towards the attainment of substantial wisdom, were man but sensible of his own NOTHINGNESS! Man is as great a nothing as a shadow itself. As a shadow is without substance, without life, and without motion of itself, and vanishes at the departure of the sun; so is the condition of man, whenever the Lord withdraws the light of life from him! And it is worthy of observation, that, the nearer the sun is, the less are the shadows observed to be; and on the contrary, the farther the sun removes from us, the larger the shadows appear. The same happens to man: the more of God and his gifts is present with a good man, the less he esteems himself, the less he boasts of himself, and of what he calls *his*. As, on the contrary, the farther a man is removed from God, the greater he is in his own eyes; the more he is puffed up with parts and abilities, the more he extends the bounds of his pride, and the less he knows how to keep within proper compass.

Again, as shadows at the setting of the sun are greatest, though then just ready to disappear and vanish away; their greatness being but a forerunner of their approaching end; so is it with the shadows of this world, and the whole train of vain pomps and pleasures. They commonly post away suddenly when we are most lifted up by them; it being generally a certain sign of impending ruin, when a person relies too much upon the shadowy appearances of perishing grandeur. As the shadows vanish upon the with-

* Psalm, xxxix. 5.

drawing of the sun; so when an empty man becomes great in his own eyes, the divine sun sets upon him unexpectedly, and he returns to be *nothing*, then when he thought to be *something*. Moreover, as the shadow has no life of itself, but entirely moves with the motion of the sun, upon which it depends: so man of his own nature, is nothing but a carcase destitute of life and motion; and it is God alone who is able to put life and motion in it. The shadow of a tall and goodly tree moves not, but as the tree itself is moved; so man only liveth and moveth in God,* of whom he is a shadow and reflected image. The hour of death will at length fully declare, that man's "days on the earth are as a shadow," † as a vain shew or image;‡ nay, as grass which grows up, but soon withereth when it is mown down: so fades our life away immediately, when it is cut down by the fatal scythe of death. ‖ Lo! thus are our days consumed like smoke, and we are "gone like the shadow when it declineth." §

If a man by true humility be thoroughly persuaded of all this, and be convinced that he is nothing in the sight of God but a lifeless shadow; then, verily, his repentance is unfeigned, and his heart right before the Lord. And as it is appointed unto all men once to undergo a natural death, so ought all certainly daily to die unto sin, that they may live unto God, and depart happily out of this mortal life, when all the shadows disappear. This daily dying to the world, as it is undoubtedly the best exercise, so it is also the best preparation for the hour of death; and if we

* Acts, xvii. 28.
† 1 Chron. xxix. 15.—Job, viii. 9.
‡ Psalm, xxxix. 5.
‖ Psalm, cii. 3, 11. ciii. 15,
§ Psalm, cix. 23.

earnestly practise the former, we shall then be fitted for undergoing the latter. That which we most frequently practise, becomes most perfect to us.

The *fourth* property of true repentance, as it works by faith, is *union with God*, implied in these words: *But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever, and thy remembrance unto all generations.* As if the Prophet had said: "Though I am persuaded, that I am a perishing shadow, and wither like grass,* yet I am no less certain, that in *thee* I shall abide for ever, for thou thyself art an eternal and never fading subtance." As by sin a man is divorced from God; so by true conversion, he is again united to him. As the person of Christ is indivisible, notwithstanding his two natures; and as the eternal Deity united the human nature in Christ Jesus with itself in so firm a bond, as is not to be dissolved by death itself; (the humanity of Christ remaining in perpetual union with the Divinity, and with the glory therein residing:) so in the work of true conversion to God, penitent and believing souls are so closely and intimately united to God, that neither life nor death can separate them from him: † for he that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit, ‡ God betrothing us unto himself for ever. ‖

In a word, Christ himself is of this a most sufficient witness to us, and in us; and he is that Book of Life wherein we are plainly taught, that as his human nature abides eternally united with the divine; so all those that continue faithful to him, shall be eternally united also with their

* Psalm, cii. 11. † Rom. viii. 38. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 17.
‖ Hosea, ii. 19.

Lord and head, being *one spirit* with him. For as God is eternal, and Christ eternal; so the promises of God in Christ are also eternal and inviolable, he having made with us a covenant of everlasting grace. Therefore, though a true Christian be forsaken of the world; be vexed and tormented by sin, death, hell, and the devil himself; nay, though even his own flesh and heart fail at last, and be wholly consumed, yet is God "the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever."*

CHAPTER XI.

The fruits of true Conversion.

ALL that are in Christ by faith, are "new creatures;†" that is, they are the children of God, are righteous before God, have forgiveness of sin, and the Holy Ghost; they are partakers of the divine nature, are heirs of everlasting life, are liberated in their consciences from the law, the curse, death, the devil, hell, and damnation. All, whatever appertains to their salvation, is in them begotten of Christ by grace, and is conceived by them through faith; hence, neither time nor place, neither law nor commandment, nor ceremonies, nor any thing whatsoever, can be any hindrance to them. They are made perfect

* Psalm, lxxiii. 26. † 2 Cor. v. 17.

in Christ, who is now become a vital principle in them, and they have in him the accomplishment of the law through faith.

Thence the name of a CHRISTIAN is a higher and more excellent name than all the names in the world. It is a greater name than is to be found in palaces and courts, a name above all posts of greatness, above the whole world, with all that it contains. But on the other hand, a true Christian is lower and more abased in himself, than all things that have a name; and from his life it appears, how the name of a Christian is also the most abject name of all the names in the world, without exception. Thus, in the same degree, faith exalts a Christian *above all;* love brings down a Christian *under all.* This thou wilt then best understand, when thou seriously considerest the holy life of Christ; which is the brightest mirror both of love, and of all other virtues.

How did Christ make himself the servant of all! how humble was he in heart! how meek in spirit! how kind and friendly in words! how gracious! how obliging in his behaviour! how merciful towards the poor! how compassionate towards the distressed! how patient towards his slanderers! how calm in his answers! how gracious towards sinners! Whom did he ever despise? whom did he ever revile, being reviled? How condescending was he to the very meanest! how ready to show acts of grace to all, without distinction! how heartily did he seek the salvation of all men, praying for his very enemies and crucifiers! * How did he bear our sickness, sorrows, reproaches, stripes, wounds, and punish-

* Luke, xxiii, 34.

ments! And indeed, what else is the life of Christ, but a most accomplished pattern of love, humility, patience, and all other virtues whatsoever.

This we ought to look into, and to reflect upon it in our hearts; but especially when retired from human affairs. This, certainly, is better than all the high boasts of knowledge, and all the wit and wisdom of the world. This life of Christ is like a seal, to be stamped upon our hearts, and leave there the impression of his image, life, love, humility, patience, cross, reproach, and death. This would prove a true celestial light to our hearts, and a powerful means both to renew us in the inner man, and to transform us more and more into the divine image. Upon the whole, we see that as Christ was put *under all* men, yea, under all creatures, with regard to his *humiliation* in this world; but is now, with regard to his *exaltation*, a Lord *over all;* so a Christian is, with reference to his *faith*, a Lord *over all*, nothing excepted but God only; but with regard to his *life* and conduct, a servant of servants, being even *under all* persons and things.

CHAPTER XII.

Christ the only true Way.

"TEACH me thy way, O Lord: I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name."*

* Psalm, lxxxvi. 11.

This way is Christ. He says, "I am the Way."* But thou wilt here ask, how am I to come to him? By *faith*. And how is my heart to be united to him? Doubtless by *faith*. *Faith* unites us with Christ; *love* binds us fast; and *hope* upholds and sustains us while we walk in this way; that is, in the life of Christ. Yet at the same time, both faith, hope, and love, proceed from Christ himself, and are his work in us. All these graces flow from him, and return to him. This way goes out from him, and leads back to him again.

Faith apprehends the person of Christ, and his office; Love follows Christ in his life and conversation; Hope reaches out to the glory that is hereafter to be revealed in Christ. *Faith* will have no other Christ, no other Redeemer, no other Saviour, no other Mediator and Way for the conduct of life, but JESUS CHRIST only. *Love* sets before itself the one only life of Christ, as the most perfect and shining pattern to which to conform itself. *Hope* looks up stedfastly to Christ, as the glorious Captain of our salvation, keeping its eye fixed upon his everlasting kingdom above. This, this is the right *way;* this is the unerring truth, wherein we are to walk: and this is what is meant by *having the heart united, to fear the Lord's name.*

These three *capital* virtues are allied again to three other virtues. The alliance of faith, is with humility; of love, with patience; and of hope, with prayer. For he that believeth, humbleth himself; he that loveth, is disposed to Christian forbearance; and he that hopeth, learns to pray, and boldly to approach the throne of grace. O how goodly and beautiful is this way!

* John, xiv. 6.

This is the way of God, the way of salvation, the path to glory, even our great Master's way! And may he himself teach us this way of truth, and inspire us with courage to walk in it! Where this frame of mind is, there the soul is firmly united to the fear of the Lord; that *one thing* which David desired.* Such a one is resolved heartily to follow Christ in his humility and love, meekness and patience, mortifying, through the lowliness of Christ, the venom of pride that lurks within. Consider how Christ thy Lord was made for thee a despicable worm, and trampled upon by the basest of men! and by looking to him, learn to restrain thy haughty temper, and to abase thy supercilious looks.

In a word, let his humility slay thy *pride;* and do thou suppress the assaults of *covetousness*, by meditating on the extreme poverty of Christ. Behold, he had not so much as even where to lay his head, and how greedy art thou to grasp in possession whatever thy unbounded desires fix themselves upon! Let the spirit of *envy* die, by the consideration of the overflowing love of Christ. He hath given thee life itself, and thou grudgest thy neighbour even a morsel of bread. Let the flames of *revenge* be stifled in thy breast, by the meekness of Christ. Behold! he prayed for his enemies;† and thou dost not pray even for thy friends. His face being buffetted and spit upon by sinners, he quietly endured it; and thou canst hardly endure a severe look, or an unkind word from thy neighbour! Let the enticements to *lust* and voluptuousness be beaten down, by the exquisite pains thy Lord suffered in his holy body. Behold, and see, whether the sorrows of

* Psalm, xxvii. 4. † Luke, xxiii. 34.

any man were ever like unto his sorrows! This consideration will prove a check to the wanton lusts of thy flesh, and a curb to thy cupidity after worldly pleasure. He wore a crown of thorns; and wouldest thou wear one of gold? He wept for the sins of others; and refusest thou to weep for thine own? He was a man of sorrows; and shouldest thou wish to be a man of pleasure?

A PRAYER

FOR

TRUE CHRISTIANITY.

O Beloved Lord Jesus Christ! how few are there among men that are rightly acquainted with this only way of true godliness! Do thou shew me, O Lord, thy way, and strengthen me by thy grace, that I may walk in thy truth! Give me a heart that may fear thee; a faith that may rely upon thee; a love that may follow thee; a hope that may see thy glory; a mind that may fervently love thee; senses that may discern thee; ears that may hear thee and thy intercession upon the cross. Give me eyes that may view thee in thy humility and patience; and a mouth that may pray for mine enemies, according to that blessed pattern which thou hast set me.

Unless thou, O Lord, teach me this good and safe way, I shall go astray like a lost sheep; and the very light I follow without thee, will be darkness: and if so, O Lord, how great must darkness itself be!* O everlasting Light! thou restorest sight to the blind, and givest light to

* Matt. vi. 23.

them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Thou didst enlighten Isaac, when his bodily eyes were dim with age;* and Jacob, when he foretold his sons what should befal them in the last days.† Thou didst enlighten Simeon to see thy salvation, and the Light of the Gentiles.‡ Open also my eyes, O Lord, that I may contemplate thy admirable life, shining, as it does, with so divine a lustre, and adorned with so marvellous a beauty of heavenly virtues; that thereby I may be changed into thy image from glory to glory!‖ In the first creation there was darkness upon the face of the deep; and there is darkness also overspreading the depth of my heart! As it was then said, "Let there be light! and there was light;"§ so may the same powerful Word produce light out of my darkness, and shine in the dark place of my heart, until the day of salvation dawn, and the bright morning-star of a lively knowledge of Christ arise within me.¶

As in the first creation, the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, modelling and framing that vast expanse into order and beauty;** so let thy heavenly Spirit move also so effectually upon me, that by his operation, no less than Christ himself may be formed within me.†† As in the first creation, the earth was void and without form, until it was decked with light, as with a garment, and adorned with a variety of creatures by thy Word; so is also my degenerate heart become a horrid wilderness, and must remain so for ever, except thy hand create it anew, and replenish it with the graces of thy Spirit. As in

* Gen. xxvii. 1. † Gen. xlix. 1. ‡ Luke, ii. 30.
‖ 2 Cor. iii. 18. § Gen. i. 3. ¶ 2 Pet. i. 19.
** Gen. i. 2. †† Gal. iv. 19.

the first creation, light was divided from darkness, as having no communion with it; so in the new creation, let the night of sin and corruption fly before the glorious day of thy Gospel and grace.

Thy WORD, O Almighty Creator! is light itself; it is in Christ, and is Christ himself. This light is substantial TRUTH, and without it all men are liars, and all their works are works of darkness. Without this light, all the ways of men are ways of error and delusion, and the most shining virtue is nothing but an empty blaze, nay, death and darkness itself. Teach me, therefore, O Lord, this way of truth, this way of life, and "unite my heart to fear thy name." Let "Christ dwell in my heart by faith,"* and enable me by his Spirit to follow the steps of his love, his humility, and meekness, and to look unto him as the unerring way to life, and the hope of my approaching glory. † Let this fear of the Lord drive away sin, and let it be unto me a root of wisdom, whose branches are life and happiness. He that abideth in this fear, shall never be forsaken, whereas all others are set in slippery places, and at last will be cast into destruction.

What will all natural parts and endowments, arts and sciences, wit and learning, riches and greatness, pleasure and delights, avail me without this fear, which is the very crown of wisdom, and which exalteth them to honour that hold it fast? All good things come with the fear of God. It is a treasure that never faileth, a light that never goes out, a beauty that never fades, a pleasure that never grieves, a dignity that never ceases, a labour that never wearies. There is no

* Eph. iii. 17. † Col. i. 27.

bitterness in the fear of God, no grief or anxiety, but gladness and joy, comfort and ease.

What is wealth without this fear? what is wit without grace? what is beauty without purity of heart? what is pleasure without a good conscience? what is greatness without God's favour? A man without the fear of God, is a vapour that vanishes, a shadow that disappears, a tree that withers, a branch fit for the fire, and in fine, he is like the chaff the wind tosses away. In a word, whether a man be rich, noble, or poor, his glory is the fear of God: for no man is greater than he that feareth the Lord.

CHAPTER XIII.

Christ the Book of Life.

ALL that believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, are written "in the book of life,"* or as the Lord expresses it, "in heaven itself."† This shall be made manifest in that great day, when the Lord will "confess their names before his Father, and before his angels."‡ But besides this, the Lord Jesus himself is a most complete book of a truly Christian life: he being as the WORD and wisdom of the Father, made man, and come into the world to teach us by his life and death; and by his conduct and conversation, to set a pattern before us for our imitation.

The whole of his life, from his tender infancy to his death, was made up of nothing but a con-

* Phil. iv. 3. † Luke, x. 20. ‡ Rev. iii. 5.

tinual series of crosses and afflictions; insomuch that he took hardly any step without the inseparable attendance either of a pressing *poverty*, or of great *contempt*, or of most exquisite *pains* and sufferings: and into these *three* heads, the entire extent of the life of Christ may be fitly resolved.

The poverty which the Lord endured, may be considered again under a threefold respect. In the first place, he was poor in relation to outward things, and to the income of this world. This he himself declared to one who offered to follow him, with a sinister end: "The foxes," says he, have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head."* This indigence in worldly goods was attended by another, which was a poverty of friends and patrons, to whose help he might trust in time of distress. Nothing was more visible in his birth, than meanness and poverty. He chose to be born at Bethlehem, the least among the cities of Judah, and of a mother that was destitute of all wealth and worldly greatness.† Nor did he ever court the favour and friendship of the great and wealthy of this world. It is true, there was a cordial friendship betwixt him and Lazarus of Bethany, the Evangelist taking particular notice, that the Lord *loved him*, and thought him worthy of the eminent title of his *friend*:‡ but this friendship was not raised on any worldly advantage the Lord expected from him, but on that Christian faith, whereby he was induced to believe, that Jesus was really the true Messiah and the Saviour of the world.

The degree of the Lord's poverty, was the state of his humiliation, whereby, laying aside the

* Matt. viii. 20. † Luke, ii. 4, 7. ‡ John, xi. 3, 5, 11, 36.

*form of God, he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation.** He thereby entered into the depth of our misery, partaking of all our bodily weaknesses and infirmities. He was *wearied* in the journies he undertook in order to finish the work for which he was sent.† How many tiresome steps did he take, when he "went about doing good!"‡ But particularly, when he healed multitudes of sick and diseased, that continually crowded to him from all parts, and surrounded him often to that degree, that he could not so much as eat bread, and even his very friends thought him beside himself.‖ He fulfilled also what was said by the Prophet, and which is repeated in the history of the Gospel; "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;"§ never withdrawing from any hardship or approaching calamity, never shrinking under the burden of poverty, or cruel mockings, or unjust reproaches, or other evils and encounters, though ever so sharp and numerous. And whereas he might have been served by all the creatures of God, and waited on by legions of angels; yet he dispensed with all this glory, and did not exert that sovereign power which was lodged in him. He suffered his head to be torn by thorns, his hands to be tyed, his sacred body to be scourged, his hands and feet to be nailed to the cross, his side to be pierced with a spear. All this he freely allowed, though it was in his power to prevent it, and with one word to restrain the fury of creatures from insulting their Maker in so shameful a manner.

In a word, for our sakes, he made himself sub-

* Phil. ii. 6, 7. † John, iv. 6. ‡ Acts, x. 38.
‖ Mark, iii. 20, 21. § Isaiah, liii. 4. Matt. viii. 17.

ject to all creatures. He took upon him the form of a servant, that by his lowliness, he might repair our losses, and re-instate us in that sovereign dominion over all the creatures, which we had forfeited in Adam. He rose from the dead again, and gained a perfect conquest at last, thereby to purchase for us an everlasting victory. He suffered himself to be tempted by the devil,* hurried about by his malice, tormented by his instruments the Jews, fastened to the cross by their cruelty; and all this he underwent, in order to rescue mankind from their spiritual thraldom, from the power of the devil leading them captive at his will, and all his subordinate tools and vassals. Thus the strongest became weak; the Almighty infirm; the most glorious, became most despicable; the most beautiful, most abhorred and hated; the most exalted, most exposed himself to temptations of all kinds, to sufferings and difficulties, to pains and hardships. Hereby he designed to check our sinful tenderness and effeminacy, as a thing utterly unbecoming spiritual soldiers, and to inure his followers betimes to the straight, though despised way of mortification.

Alas! how tender and delicate are now in general those that call themselves Christians! How unlike are they to the pattern whence they derive their name, and to the original copy which they pretend to imitate!† The smallest cross is now complained of as an insufferable burden, and a little trouble and toil undergone for God and our neighbour, seems a sufficient plea why men should start back into the smooth way, and drop entirely the article of the cross, so dis-

* Matt. iv. 1. † 1 Pet. ii. 21.

pleasing to the old man. Not to mention here, how uneasy, how restless, how impatient they are even under those trials the Lord sends upon them, for promoting thereby the recovery of their own souls, and the glory of his name.

Thus the Lord laid aside for a while the form of God. But this was not all. He did no less lay aside the use of the divine wisdom which resided in him. His conversation with others, was plain and easy, and he behaved himself like a man *not knowing letters*, as the Jews expressed it.* He did not assume to himself the wonted formalities of a great doctor, or of an acute reasoner and disputer. Neither did he act like men that value themselves on account of their parts, wit, polite learning, and high descent. Nothing was more visible in his life and conduct, than that quiet serenity of mind which he enjoyed in the midst of all the storms of the world. This was attended, however, by a divine power, an unaffected holiness of manners, an unfeigned charity, meekness, and humility. In his delivery, he made use of plain and easy terms, adapted even to the meanest capacity. Thus he "taught the way of God in truth,"† and as one "having authority;"‡ though at the same time, those who in their manners and discourses endeavoured to please the corrupt taste of the world, would cry him down for an idiot, or a man of no wit and learning at all. Thus the eternal WISDOM of God speaking through the Prophets of old, was cast off as folly, and the true light of souls rejected as an imposture: all which may serve to instruct us not to over-value ourselves upon our parts and abilities; but considering they are not given us

* John, vii. 15. † Matt. xxii. 16. ‡ Matt. vii. 29.

for the gratification of pride, entirely lay them out for advancing the glory of God, and the good of our fellow-creatures.

This simplicity of our Lord, was again accompanied by a denial of his glory and majesty. So great was his condescension, that he freely conversed with sinners; and not only with the meanest, but with the worst of men. He did eat and drink with them; and this for no other reason, but to answer thereby the great errand on which he was sent, which was, to "seek and to save that which was lost." * It was on this account he was so grievously defamed with a multitude of odious names by his enemies; who called him a gluttonous man, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners: † and at another time, they exclaimed against him as a Samaritan, that had a devil. ‡ Nor did their rage and malice stop here, but at last they carried it so far, that they executed him between two thieves, he himself being reputed the greatest villain of the three.

This he suffered, in order to "bear the sin of many, and to make intercession for the transgressors." ‖ How easily might he have acquired a great name, by the eminent holiness of his life, by that unmixed innocency of manners which carried so resplendent a lustre with it? Nay, he might have gained a greater repute than John himself, who, according to the Lord's own testimony, was a "burning and shining light." § But he readily renounced any such affectation of holiness, thereby to give a check to all our superficial pretenders to piety, who are too apt to value themselves on account of an outward shew of

* Luke, xix. 10. † Luke, vii. 34. ‡ John, viii. 48.
‖ Isaiah, liii. 12. § John, v. 35.

religion: though generally those that busy themselves so much about form and appearance, have but little of the life and power of God within them.

In short, the Lord forsook all that is great and pompous in the eye of the world. He was a king, and yet would be subject to kings and magistrates, nay, to his father and mother, though they were so mean and indigent. "He went down with his parents to Nazareth, and was subject unto them,"* and, as some will have it, wrought at his father's trade. He was Lord over all, and yet when he came into the world, "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,"† clothing himself in the attire of poverty and meanness. He was the great and wise Prophet, nay, the substantial wisdom of God; and chose disciples of the lowest rank, a plain and simple people, not raised at all above the common level of men. And when it was in his power to behave himself as a Lord and Master, at least in the small company of his followers; yet did he even there divest himself of that right, being "among them as one that serveth."‡ He assumed no lordlike air over them, but chose rather to be a master in life and doctrine, than to have any other distinguishing character of grandeur and pre-eminence. Thus when he taught the duty of obedience, he shewed at the same time a pattern of obedience in his own conduct. When he endeavoured to instil into his disciples a sense of humility, of patience, of subjection to their superiors, and of other Christian virtues; he practised them first himself, that so his own example might have the greater influence

* Luke, ii. 51. † Matt. xx. 28. ‡ Luke, xxii. 27.

upon the lives of others. Of this, he has left us abundance of admirable instances. Being Head and Master, he thought it becoming his character to be chief also in bearing affronts, reproaches, injuries, poverty, misery, and in performing the most contemptible services, even that of washing his disciples' feet.* Thus he proved a Master, Head, and Teacher, not in doctrine only; but in life, in example, and practice.

Alas! how are we now fallen away from so glorious, so shining a pattern of virtue, into folly and vanity! Our Head despised worldly honour, and lo! we are in pursuit of it. He submitted to crosses and trials, and we shrink back at the very sight of them; unwilling to be disturbed in the enjoyment of our ease and prosperity. He became obedient unto death; and we, like libertines, indulge ourselves in all manner of licentiousness, as if self-will were now become the standing rule of our actions. Alas! this does not in the least agree with the example the Lord has set before us, nor with the spiritual maxims contained in the Book of Life, which he has left us for imitation. Consider, therefore, O man, whether the way wherein thou walkest come up to that excellent way wherein thy Lord and Master walked himself. If thou despisest the narrow way of Jesus, and followest the way of the world now in vogue; then know certainly that thy way, though smooth and pleasing for a while, will end in utter destruction at last!

* John, xiii. 5.

CHAPTER XIV.

Christ a pattern of Humility.

"HE is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."* This scripture contains the second head of the life of poverty of Christ, which is the contempt he endured from the world. After thou hast read over, and seriously considered the lesson of poverty exhibited by the Lord; take also a view of the deep and unaffected humility, which was so eminently seen in his whole life and conduct. Never did he catch at the applauses of men; never was he actuated by ambition, or any thirst after temporal honour and greatness: on the contrary, whenever men offered to bestow honours, praises, and dignities upon him, he fled from them, he refused, he declined them, both by word and deed: never did he accept of any honour from men; nay, not even when "they would take him by force to make him a king." †

On the other hand, with what inexpressible humility did he bear all the insolence, the reproaches, and calumnies with which his enemies loaded him? He himself (as was hinted before,) was execrated as the vilest Samaritan, and his miracles maliciously ascribed to the power of Beelzebub. The sound doctrine he brought down from heaven, was most daringly exploded as blasphemy; and he who taught it, was every where insulted by foul and uncharitable

* Isaiah, liii. 3. † John, vi. 15.

censures, and such base lies and slanders as the malice of men could contrive. In the progress of his years, it soon appeared, that his life was designed to be a scene of perpetual misery and contempt. He was betrayed and sold; he was denied and buffetted; he was spit upon and crowned with thorns; he was derided and scourged; he was smitten, and sentenced to death; he was quite rejected at last, and condemned to undergo the ignominious "death of the cross."* He was forsaken by God and men; and in fine, being stripped of all, was executed in the midst of scandalous malefactors, hanging on the tree like one accursed.†

He was then made the common gazing-stock of all his enemies, and hissed at by priests, scribes, and elders. His prayers were turned into ridicule; his garments were parted by lots; and at the approach of the very pangs of death, he had nothing to refresh himself but vinegar mingled with gall.‡ At last, when all was finished, he expired on the cursed tree of the cross, full of the reproaches, hatred, and indignation of the world; insomuch, that even after his death, he had his body "pierced with a spear, and his grave made with the wicked."‖ Nay, his enemies continued to fume with rage and malice, even now when he had given up the ghost; and by calling him a deceiver, still murdered him with their tongues, whose body they had but newly slain with their hands.§ Being risen at last from the dead, and triumphing over his enemies; they then boldly denied the truth of his resurrection, and left no means untried to blacken

* Phil. ii. 8. † Gal. iii. 13. ‡ Matt. xxvii. 35.
‖ John, xix. 34. Isaiah, liii. 9. § Matt. xxvii. 63.

his divine character, and to misrepresent all the transactions of his life as a cheat and imposture. Thus was the Lord, both in the beginning, progress, and end of his ever-blessed life, "despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

In the course of our Lord's life, there is not only displayed to us the abounding treasure of redemption gained by Christ, of which he himself is the very source and basis; but it is also most clearly demonstrated, that in this scene of suffering, he is our great teacher and master, our prophet and shepherd, our instructor, light, and constant monitor; that also we, by looking unto him, may learn to despise earthly pomp and greatness; and by closely adhering to him, like true members to their head, "grow up into him in all things,"* being rendered conformable unto his life, "and rooted and grounded in his love."†

But alas! how is it possible we should be fit for so eminent a character as that of being members of Christ, whilst our lives are so contrary to the life of him who is designed to be our Head? Certainly, whilst in our actions, words, and endeavours, we do not entirely aim at God's glory, but our own; it is more than evident, that Christ does not live in us, but the prince of this world. It is plain, that we are not yet loose from the various ties of this world; for "whatsoever is born of God," and loves the Lord, "overcometh the world;"‡ and so of course is not overcome by it. Nor does such a one any longer love the world; for "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in

* Ephes. iv. 15. † Ephes. iii. 17. ‡ 1 John, v. 4.

him;"* and consequently, that of Christ must be absent likewise.

Upon the whole, the life of Christ should be to us a constant monitor awakening us to press after him, who is the captain of our salvation, and to die unto the world even as he did. Consider the beginning, together with the progress and final conclusion of his happy life, and nothing, you will confess, speaks more loud, nothing is more evident, nothing more obvious to every one's eye, than his profound HUMILITY, with which he bore the contempt and reproaches of all those that love the world.

CHAPTER XV.

Of Contempt of the World.

IT is a most moving complaint uttered by the Messiah: "I became a reproach unto them; when they looked upon me, they shaked their heads. Help me, O Lord my God; O save me according to thy mercy; that they may know that this is thy hand, that thou Lord hast done it. Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed, but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. For he shall stand at

* 1 John, ii. 15.

the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul." *

With this pathetic complaint of our Redeemer, every Christian ought to be deeply affected, and he ought to represent it to himself as a mirror, in which to behold the life of Christ under the cross, together with that of all the saints in general. This way of the cross has been copiously set forth in the Book of Psalms, in order to render it the more familiar to us, and to teach us betimes, that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." † Such a consideration gives present ease and comfort under the contempt and reproaches incident to the true followers of Christ, and accustoms them to a conformity to the image of Christ: ‡ which as it is one of the greatest honours our Master bestows on his disciples; so it is by the world abhorred and loathed, just as a healing medicine is by a distempered and delicate palate. This conformity is however, the grand duty of a Christian, inuring him to bear his Master's reproach ‖ and *abject* image in time, that he may also hereafter bear his *glorious* image in eternity. § But as the cixth Psalm above-mentioned, contains a prayer of Christ poured out in the midst of his sufferings; so it mentions, in the latter part, three kinds of trouble more particularly, with which the Lord (whose type David was,) found himself oppressed.

In the first place, the Lord complaineth of a vehement anxiety of heart, declared in this manner: "I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me." Behold, what complaints

* Psalm, cix. 25. † Acts, xiv. 22. ‡ Rom. viii. 29.
‖ Heb. xiii. 13. § Phil. iii. 21.

this holy, this eminent person is reduced to! And what is the reason of them? Surely, to acquaint us in the most affectionate terms, what he hath suffered for our sake. He says, "I am poor;" and lo! thou sweatest and toilest to get estates, to hoard up riches, and yet when thou hast them, thou art still poor and discontented in the possession of them. He says, "I am needy;" and thou, O man, art entirely bent upon thy ease, prosperity, and fulnesss of bread! He complains, "my heart is wounded within me;" how unreasonable is it then, O man! that thou shouldest be humoured and gratified in all thy vain and carnal propensities! Nothing must run contrary to thy extravagant doings! Nothing will be kindly received by thee but what is seasoned with mirth and alacrity; sorrow and melancholy being far banished from my heart; nay, not permitted to give thee any disturbance amidst thy enjoyments. But alas! how is it possible for a Christian, ever to reflect upon the sad and sorrowful life of that Lord and Master, whose servant and disciple he pretends to be, and who hath left him so fair and bright a pattern for imitation? He complains, that "his heart was wounded within him;" it was bruised, and as it were smitten with rods, and exceedingly heavy.

If nothing will compose thee to a love of the *cross* of Christ, let at least the consideration of the sacredness of the afflicted person, infinitely exalted above thee, work thee into a ready compliance with his life. Such a consideration will give thee ease and patience under any grief that may attend thee, and make thee relish better those pure and untainted pleasures which will certainly succeed the cross. Therefore, think with thyself in this manner: "I am now put to trouble and

anxiety of heart; but the same befel also my Lord and Master, whose very soul was surrounded with sorrows so heavy and acute, with pains so fierce and dreadful, that nothing of what I shall ever undergo can equal them." However, the Lord, after his sufferings, entered into everlasting joy; after our contempt, into never-fading glory; through death into life; and through hell into heaven. The scene was now altered, and a happy exchange followed, being no less than an exceeding weight of glory, after a short weight of misery; and thus will it be with the sincere followers of the Lord, to whom their crosses will prove but as so many advances to a more excellent glory, and their affliction will be the very inlet into everlasting bliss and happiness.

After the Lord has spoken of the inward sorrow that pressed upon him, he goes on to give us, secondly, a view of the infirmities of his body also: "I am gone," says he, "like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as a locust. My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness."* A most expressive description of the common frailty of human nature! What is a shadow, but a mere nothing, an empty lifeless appearance? To such an abject lowliness, to such an inconceivable degree of humiliation, the Lord suffered himself to be reduced whilst he dwelt among us! He who is life and light itself, and the bottomless fountain of life and happiness, is exposed to labour and infirmities: and should not men hereby learn so much humility at least, as to think themselves far greater nothings, and more perishing shadows, than the Lord of life himself!

* Psalm, cix. 23, 24.

But he goes on: "I am tossed up and down as the locust." The Lord had no settled habitation upon earth, as men of the world have, whose delight is in ample buildings, fixed entertainments, and stately palaces. He was in a constant pilgrimage towards that kingdom which cannot be moved. For this reason he is said to have only tabernacled among us,* and is here compared to a locust, which having no nest or abiding place, is fearful, and tossed to and fro with every wind.† And even in this our blessed Saviour has left us a pattern, to walk as he walked; and since we have no continuing city here, to seek one to come, which "hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."‡

What is farther added of the weakness of his knees, and the failing of his flesh, abundantly appeared about the time of his passion, when his "strength was dried up like a potsherd;"‖ and this may be a monitor to us under bodily diseases and infirmities. Should we complain (as many are apt to do) of a fit of sickness, when the Lord of life pined away into weakness, and languished in misery? Should we pamper our bodies, when the Lord endured faintness and fastings? And what matters it, how languid, weak, and neglected our body be, if our soul and spiritual life be but of a vigorous habit? It is this on which we ought to lay out our time and diligence: it is after this we ought to look most carefully: it is this which ought to "eat that which is good, and delight itself in spiritual fatness,"§ that so it may grow

* John, i. 14. † Nahum, iii. 17. Exod. x. 19.
‡ Heb. xi. 10. ‖ Psalm, xxii. 15. § Isaiah, lv. 2.

"strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."*

Thirdly, the Lord explains the great contempt he underwent in this world, in order to stop us in our pursuit after vain honour, pride, and self-esteem. "I became," says he, "a reproach unto them, when they looked upon me, they shaked their heads." The enemies of Christ insulted him in the vilest and most licentious manner, expressing, even by signs and gestures, the scornful and scoffing temper which they harboured within. What indignity is there like to this! But the anointed of the Lord endured it all for no other end, than to rescue mankind from eternal scorn and infamy; for man having become a scorner and hater of God, defying him and the offers of his grace;† Christ was designed to make atonement for so heinous a sin, by the extreme contempt which he willingly embraced. However, as the Lord by his humble submission to the contempt of the world, has laid a mighty obligation on all Christians to be his followers therein; so the considerations here annexed, may be of great use for supporting a man under sufferings of that nature.

First consider, that in bearing the contempt of the world, thou bearest no less than the very image of Christ, and followest him who is the head, master, and captain of thy salvation.‡

2. To be contemned and disrespectfully used by the world, is of great efficacy for improving thyself in true humility; a virtue of so high and heavenly a nature, as to be alone fit to receive the influence of divine grace. "For

* Ephes. vi. 10. † Rom. i. 30. ‡ Rom. viii. 17.

God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."*

3. Thy suffering reproaches for the sake of truth, is an evidence that thou art ranked with that cloud of witnesses, who in all ages have been made "as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things," and so continue to be esteemed "unto this day."†

4. Remember that those that are come out "of great tribulation, shall be before the throne of God" at last, ‡ and be there "confessed before the angels of God."‖

5. What consequence is it how contemptibly the world uses thee, since thou art not to rise in the last day (as many shall), "to shame and everlasting contempt,"§ (the Lord having redeemed thee from that) but to honour and glory; this being the reward of all those that have here endured the revilings of a perverse world.

6. The world, like an imperious mistress, frowns on all those that get loose from her tyranny. But when the world frowns, God favours. When men withdraw their kindness, then God confers his mercy. For this purpose the Psalmist prays: "Help me, O Lord my God: O save me according to thy mercy; that they may know, that this is thy hand, and that thou Lord hast done it."¶ As the Lord removed at last his Son from the cross, from all the labours of his soul, from all the insults of his enemies, and crowned him with glory in heaven; so will he deal with thee also, if thou continuest faithful in bearing the cross, and all the injuries of a pro-

* 1 Pet. v. 5. † 1 Cor. iv. 13. ‡ Rev. vii. 14.
‖ Luke, xii. 8. § Dan. xii. 2. ¶ Psalm, cix. 26.

fane world. On that day shall the world stand amazed at the dignity of a glorified saint, and at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all they looked for. But they shall see that the scene is altered, and shall know, that it is the Lord's hand that hath done it.

7. It was God himself who suffered his beloved Son to be thus contemned, reproached, and reviled, according to that of David, who was a type of Christ both in his troubles and triumphs: "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face."* Remember, therefore, that the same God, who ordered a bitter cup to be drunk off by his dear Son, hath also allotted thee thy trials, "to humble thee, and to know what is in thy heart."†

8. Be sure that the Lord will change all the undeserved reproaches thrown upon thee, into so many blessings, and in his own time pour shame and confusion upon the scoffers. This is expressed in the following verse: "Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice." Nay, if the wicked curse ever so much, yet "shall the curse causeless never come,"‡ as plainly appears from Balaam's attempt, who could not "curse, whom God had not cursed."‖ Whereas, on the contrary, whosoever feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last, and he shall find favour in the day of his death. The same blessing is bestowed on Abraham, and on all those that walk in the steps of his faith: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."§ And in another place, we have this encourage-

* Psalm, lxix. 7. † Deut. viii. 2. ‡ Prov. xxvi. 2.
‖ Numb. xxiii. 8. § Gen. xii. 3.

ment: "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings."* And our Redeemer himself hath declared: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you."† And his Apostle: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you."‡

The Lord goes on in the aforesaid Psalm: "I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude."‖ Christ triumphs at last over his sufferings, and now returns thanks to his heavenly Father for the very crosses and reproaches that were allotted him. This is the temper of every sincere Christian. He possesses that heroic nobleness, that elevation of mind, which makes him thankful in the midst of afflictions and reproaches, particularly when he looks on the hand of that kind Father who entails all this upon him. And truly, the Lord never inflicts a judgment on any soul, but he affords at the same time sufficient reason for thanking and blessing him for that affliction. Thus is gratitude the happy product of crosses and trials. And this consideration is fit to sweeten the duty of resignation to the will of God. He that for the love of Christ readily submits to the contempt of a vain world, shall be honoured by God again, both in this world and in the other. There is a time, wherein the Lord raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.§ Surely, it argues an excellent spirit, when a man for Christ's sake bears the insults of the wicked, and maintains an

* Isaiah, li. 7. † Matt. v. 11. ‡ 1 Pet. iv. 14.
‖ Psalm, cix. 30. § Psalm, cxiii. 7.

unshaken calmness of mind, in the midst of all the calumnies of the world. This is "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price."*

The Psalm concludes, "For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul."† Here is comfort sufficient to make a Christian bear up against the hardships, reproaches, and straits, he is exposed to in his warfare. It is never said, the Lord will stand at the right hand of the violent and great ones, of the oppressors and persecutors; but he will stand at the right hand of the poor, who being destitute of the arm or support of men, flee to the Lord alone for help and refuge, as to the sole object of their faith and dependance. Those are "remembered, when he maketh inquisition for blood;"‡ and those are the afflicted, or the humble, "whose cry the Lord doth not forget." Tertullian tells us, "We are then absolved by God, when the world condemns us;" who also usually frustrates the machinations of the wicked. For though these "watch the righteous, and seek to slay him; yet will the Lord not leave him in their hand, nor condemn him when he is judged."‖ Thus will the Lord attend thee, O man! with a wonderful deliverance, and afford thee reason enough to extol his name among many, for his marvellous kindness. Certainly David himself "had fainted, unless he had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait therefore on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."§ "Therefore judge nothing before

* 1 Pet. iii. 4. † Ps. cix. 31. ‡ Ps. ix. 12.
‖ Ps. xxxvii. 32. § Ps. xxvii. 13, 14.

the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God."*

CHAPTER XIII.

Of true Honour.

"HOLD not thy peace, O God, my praise!" † This is a prayer of the Son of God, spoken in a prophetical spirit, (as indeed the whole Psalm is), and foretelling both the sufferings of Christ, and of his afflicted members; together with the triumphs of faith, or of an entire dependance upon God, attended with an utter extirpation of all his enemies. The purport or substance of the first words of this prayer, may be more fully expressed in this manner:

'O my heavenly Father! thou knowest that in this world I have not sought my own glory, but the glory of thy holy name, and the salvation of all men: and therefore was I so bitterly persecuted, blasphemed, contemned, and vilified. Nevertheless this is my comfort, that thou art my Father, and that I am thy only begotten Son: for, lo! this is my glory, and this is my praise in heaven with thee. And this my glory wilt thou in due time manifest and bring to light; that by thy glorifying me, ‡ the world may see who it is they have blasphemed and persecuted. Father,

*1 Cor. iv. 5. † Ps. cix. 1. ‡ John, xii. 28.

glorify thy name; and hold not thy peace, O my glory, and my God!

Hence we are to learn, that such have the greatest glory and praise in heaven, as in this world are the most persecuted for righteousness sake. This we may gather from the example of our Lord himself, who encourages us to endure the cross, without being wearied in our minds. From him, the true Book of Life, we may learn this wisdom, and thereby obtain a sound knowledge of God, and heavenly matters. But that we may the better transcribe the life of Christ into our own, let us carefully observe the following considerations:

1. Christ never sought upon earth his own glory in any thing that he did; but accounted it sufficient for him, that God alone was his glory. So let us, in like manner, reject the empty glory and praises of this world, in whatever we do; endeavouring only that God be glorified in us, saying—"Ah, Lord God! give us also such a heart, even the heart of Christ thy Son, that we may have our glory in *Thee* alone, and not in *ourselves;* that we may have our glory in heaven, and not upon earth.

2. It was the highest glory of the Lord Christ, that he was the only begotten Son of God. And for this reason did the world persecute, vilify, and blaspheme him. So a Christian should look for no other honour than what he enjoys in the paternal love of God, by the witness of the Spirit residing within him.

'Grant us also, dear Father, to count it our greatest glory and joy, that we are thy children; that so we may also obtain the eternal fruition of thy love and promise, and may, by virtue of our adoption, come to possess in

thee an everlasting inheritance. Remind us also, that if the world hate, envy, reproach, and persecute us, it has done the same to thy dear and holy child Jesus.'

3. It is the glory of the Lord Jesus, that he wrought so many divine works, that he went about continually doing the most wondrous acts of grace and beneficence to mankind; and that he did this from pure love only, and from the highest compassion to the miseries of fallen nature. However, notwithstanding all this, he received nothing but hatred and most heinous ingratitude. Hence also our hearts ought to break forth in some such manner as the following:

'Ah, loving God! give us generous, grateful, faithful hearts, so that we may be always ready to do good to as many as we possibly can; and that we may be never deterred from acts of charity, either by the stupid unthankfulness of an hardened world, or by the unworthiness of the objects we bestow them on; ascribing not to ourselves, but to thy name only, the glory of all we do.'

4. It is the highest glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he has, out of pure love, laid down his life for us; that he has purchased us with his own blood; that he has been obedient to the Father, even unto death; that with the greatest meekness he has endured the vilest reproach; and with the utmost patience, borne the exquisite pains of the cross. Let the fire of devotion, kindled within, break forth, therefore, into these or the like expressions:

'O God, our glory, help us, that we may also overcome our enemy with love; that we may subdue our flesh with godly obedience; bear the reproach of the world with the meekness and

long-suffering of Christ; obtain the victory through patience; and being thus made strong in the Lord, be more than conquerors through him that loved us!'

5. The sovereign glory of the blessed Jesus, our dearest Lord, is his exaltation to the right-hand of God. He hath a name given him, which is "above every name; that, at the name of Jesus, every knee, both in heaven and in earth, should bow, and all tongues confess him to be their Lord."*

'Help, O gracious God! that we may ever esteem it our highest glory to be made conformable to our ever-blessed Head and Saviour; that so when he shall hereafter appear in power and majesty, we also may appear with him in glory and dignity, after we have here endured the cross, and continued faithful to the end! For "then shall every man have praise of God."'†

6. The glory of Christ the Lord, is, that he is the only Head of his Church in general, and of every member thereof in particular; a glorious King of his people; and an everlasting High-Priest, making intercession for us.

'Help us with thy grace, O God most gracious, that we may evermore account it our greatest glory, that we are the members of thy Son, and subjects of his kingdom, and that we may enjoy all the privileges and benefits purchased by his high-priestly intercession, sacrifice, and benediction.'

7. Another branch of the glory of Christ, is, that God has most wonderfully displayed and magnified his name throughout the whole world: and has, (in opposition to all his enemies, blas-

* Phil. ii. 9. † 1 Cor. iv. 5.

phemers, and persecutors, who would not own him to be the Son of God), in the most public and solemn manner attested his cause, declared him to be his Son by mighty signs and wonders, and established faith in his name, amongst many nations and languages, in spite of all the malice and policy of hell and Satan. Notwithstanding that God held his peace for a while, and vailed the glory of his Son with the mystery of the cross; yet was this only designed, in order that it might break forth the more gloriously hereafter, and like the sun, hid awhile under a cloud, shine with the greater lustre, when the cloud is withdrawn, and the whole earth called upon to behold the bright glory of the Son of righteousness. For out of Sion now God appears in perfect beauty:* yea, our God comes, who is Immanuel; and he shall not keep silence always. For though God may seem now and then to be silent, and to hold his peace when his Church is insulted and persecuted; yet is there nothing more certain, than that after the short hour of probation, he will no longer keep silence, but with a high hand deliver us from the reproach which we suffered, and "remove his stroke away from us," that we may rejoice in his salvation.† However, "it doth not yet appear what we shall then be."‡

The conclusion of the whole is this: it is God alone who is to be *our glory*; it is not the world, nor wealth, nor honour, nor greatness, nor the arm of flesh, nor the wit and prudence of men, that I may call my glory; but God, and only God, is my glory! Wherefore, "let not the wise man glory in his wisdom," as it is written,

* Ps. l. 2, 3. † Ps. xxxix. 10. ‡ 1 John, iii. 2.

"neither let the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord."*

CHAPTER XVII.

Of Triumph over Calumnies.

AMONG the many crosses and troubles of a Christian, a false and slanderous tongue is none of the least, as we may evidently see, from the example of Christ himself, whom the Pharisees, with their envenomed tongues, both in his life, and at his death, did most maliciously sting. Herein the Lord left a pattern of heroic patience to every Christian, who must not think to escape, since the great Master himself was wounded with the blows of malicious tongues. The more conformable any one is to Christ, and the more zealously he follows Christ's steps, the more is he also insulted by false and deceitful tongues. This plainly appears from the example of holy David, who was most miserably plagued by slanderers, as he himself complains in the following Psalms; iii. iv. x. xii. xv. xxxi. l. lii. lv. lviii. lxiv. lxix. cii. cxx. and cxl.

Indeed, there is hardly one of all the Prophets of old, who did not have these deadly arrows shot against him by murderous tongues; for "their tongue is an arrow shot out: he speaks

* Jer. ix. 23, 24. 1 Cor. i. 31.

peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he lieth in his wait."* All honest hearts ought, therefore, to take heed not to be defiled by backbiters, but to be defended against them. As he that handleth a man infected with leprosy, or any infectious distemper, must expect to be so infected; so he that gives ear to lying tongues, too often catches the same distemper; the poison of slandering insensibly working itself into all those that do not immediately fly from it. Now, since a Christian is forbidden to retort evil for evil,† (this agreeing in no wise with the Christian faith;) there is no other counsel left, but that by a conscience void of offence, he derives his comfort from those divine oracles with which the Lord has furnished him for that purpose.

Let thy first comfort be the example of Christ and of all the saints. It fares no worse with us in this respect, than with Christ our head, and with all that have ever been most dear to him. Nothing of this kind has befallen us, which has not been before in all ages undergone by his followers. And since the examples of others have generally a strong influence on our lives, and readily suggest themselves to our remembrance in time of trouble; we ought, therefore, to improve all those instances into an encouragement to bear our treatment with patience, for the sake of the joy that usually springs up from the reproach of the cross. Look then upon the prince of thy salvation, look upon the lives of all the saints of old, those who have been the greatest lights in their generation.

Consider particularly, the example of Moses,

* Jer. ix. 8. † Rom. xii. 17. Matt. v. 39.

who esteemed the reproach of Christ more than the crown of Egypt; and who, by reason of the continual contradictions he underwent, is said to have been a man afflicted* above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.† And what shall we say of David? He was truly in his time, the very Mark, as it were, at which all the false tongues in the land shot their murtherous arrows. "Mine enemies," said he, "revile me all the day long: and they that are mad against me, are sworn together against me."‡ They affronted him daily with the reproach of his misery, turning him as it were into a proverb, and offering him the most heinous indignity that can be offered to a man. And what shall we say of Job? How was he upbraided by his friends, and grieved with their tongues! And how fell Daniel, that holy Prophet, into the mouth of the ungodly, as into an open sepulchre, yea, as into a den of lions! Yet how powerfully did the Lord rescue Moses, Job, and Daniel! All these are gone before thee, and their examples if duly considered, will excite in thee a spirit of holy emulation, and draw thee into the same way of the cross by which they entered into the kingdom of God.‖ Behold, thy Lord Jesus goeth before thee, pursued with the curses and revilings of the Pharisee! There goeth Moses before, and the faction of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, following behind with execrations in their mouths, and stones in

* Our version renders it, "now the man Moses was very *meek:*" but in many other places, the same word is rendered by *afflicted;* the original bearing both significations. The practice of meekness is furthered by affliction.—Vide Ainsworth, in loc.

† Numb. xii. 3. ‡ Psalm, cii. 8. ‖ Acts, xiv. 22.

their hands, to rid themselves of him!* There is David in sore trials, and Shimei behind, cursing his king!† And there are the Apostles of our Lord, and a faithless multitude behind stopping their ears, and running madly upon them!

It is not enough, however, slightly and superficially, to reflect on the example of the saints; but we must learn also to be *followers* of them, when we are tried as they were, and in every tribulation copy after their meekness and patience. How shall meekness appear, or how shall patience be exercised, if thou be not contradicted; or if there be none to deride, slander, or vilify thee? Thou must, therefore, patiently take up thy cross with them, and meekly follow the Lord Christ in the steps which he has left thee. This argues a Christian generosity, and a temper that becomes a disciple of the blessed Jesus. This is also agreeable to thy calling; for thou art indeed called to suffer with thy Saviour, not to avenge thyself, not to return evil for evil, not to revile again being reviled, not to threaten being slandered, but quietly to commit thy cause "to him that judgeth righteously."‡ In this manner thou must, "out of the good treasure of thy heart," bring forth good words in return for the bad words which thou hast received;‖ because the evil tongues must give an account in the day of judgment of every *idle word* which they have spoken. And this, certainly will at the last day prove a burden heavy enough. Leave all, therefore, to the Lord, to do as he pleaseth, who will not fail to do right. Recompence and vengeance belong to him alone.§ The ungodly

* Numb. xvi. † 2 Sam. xvi. 5. ‡ 1 Pet. ii. 23.
‖ Matt. xii. 35, 36. § Deut. xxxii. 35.

may boast much, and be very confident in their own inventions, yet shall their foot slide in time. But as for thee, O Christian, fix thine eye on the Lord Jesus, and the lamb-like frame of his mind. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth." *

From the examples of the saints, we are in the next place to learn a sovereign remedy, which they made use of against the venom of evil tongues. *This is prayer.* They prayed, and so they were healed and comforted. When they were bitterly cursed by their adversaries, they sent up only their cry to God, saying: "Let them curse; but bless thou." † Consider the whole Book of Psalms throughout. How did David defend himself with prayer, as with a wall of iron, against false tongues! They are all foolish marksmen, who bend their bow against the innocent; and draw the sword to slay such as are of a right conversation: for their lies and slanders shall return at last upon their own heads, and shall enter into their own bowels, as it is written: "Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken." ‡ All must, however, be obtained by prayer: and the steps of a good man shall be established. Whenever any one prays earnestly against an evil speaker or a liar, it is as if he wrestled and fought with him; even as David wrestled with Goliah. ‖ Here two spirits fight with each other, (which renders it the more fierce and violent); that is, the prayer of faith proceeding from the Holy

* Isaiah, liii. 7. † Psalm, cix. 28. ‡ Psalm, xxxvii. 15.
‖ 1 Sam. xvii. 48, 49.

Spirit, the Spirit of Truth; and the spirit of lies proceeding from the devil, the father of lies. But all these devilish serpents of the Egyptians shall eventually be subdued, and, as it were, swallowed up by the divine rod of Moses; that is, by prayer.

Another remedy against the poison of a wicked tongue, which was used by the saints of old, is the frequent *reading and meditating upon the Word of God.* This is an excellent means of consolation and refreshment, whenever a soul is insulted and pursued by enemies. An upright heart hunted by men of falsehood and malice, is like a hart, whose thirst increases by being hunted; and as this pants after the water-brooks,* so must a soul in affliction long after the cooling streams of the divine Word, and thirst for the living waters of grace, thereby to be quickened in her spiritual drought. It is by this word of grace the Lord revives a drooping soul, speaking to her in a kind and condescending manner: "Blessed are ye," says our great Master, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."† In this most comfortable saying of our Lord, there is a threefold ground of comfort, worthy of remark. 1. Blessed are ye. 2. Rejoice; and 3. Great is your reward. Who, therefore, would not be willing, for the sake of so great and endless a good, to endure here reproach and persecution for a short period? Yea, who would not even rejoice, since he is made by this means a partaker of Christ's sufferings, in

* Psalm, xlii. 1. † Matt. v. 11, 12.

order, that when the glory of Christ shall be revealed, he may also partake with his Lord in that joy? If ye be reproached for the name of Christ happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory resteth upon you.* Remember also, that "it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth;" that he "sit alone and keep silence," when he hath any thing laid upon him to bear; yea, that he "put his mouth in the dust," and wait in hope; and that he "give his cheek to him that smiteth him," when he is "filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off for ever."†

Thou art further to learn, that the persecution of the tongue is a hellish storm, which soon rises, and soon blows over. As a traveller is not disheartened at any tempestuous weather he is liable to meet with upon the road, but provides himself the more against it: so let the spiritual pilgrim, in his weary steps towards the holy land, or the new Jerusalem, never be cast down by the storms and tempests, by the sweat and toil incident to travellers; but let him go on in hope, and continue faithful to the end of his journey. This has been uniformly the state of the true church: "O thou afflicted," says the Prophet, "tossed with tempest, and not comforted!"‡ Is it "a strange thing" that has happened unto thee?‖ What is more common to a traveller, than to be overtaken by foul and showery weather? A persevering diligence will, notwithstanding, bring him home at last.

The world are apt to spend their time in mirth. They make every one a gazing-stock, that looks

* 1 Pet. iv. 13. † Lam. iii. 27. ‡ Isaiah, liv. 11.
‖ 1 Pet. iv. 12.

with concern upon the vain follies of men, and drops a serious word in favour of virtue. What is to-day the fate of one good Christian, may to-morrow be the fate of another, according as the humour of the world works, which allows none to pass uncensured that is not in league with it. After a true Christian is once exposed to public contempt, every one flings dirt at him, till the spirit of lying and slandering at last wearies them out; and then they turn the edge of their tongue upon the next that comes in their way. "Well," say they, "let our hearts cheer us in the day of our youth, and let all care be drowned in laughter, and let serious speech be banished from our company. And because the righteous upbraideth us with offending the law by our doings, let us examine him with spitefulness and torture, that we may know his meekness, and prove his patience."

The best method a Christian can adopt in all these storms, is to be quiet under them, and to keep his mind free from anger and bitterness. He that considers every hard word to be a stain on his character, which ought to be wiped off, will by so doing only render things worse. Hence it remains, that the most effectual way to stop the fury of slanderous tongues, is to yield to it for the present, and patiently wait till time itself shall set things in a better light. He that will dispute every thing at the sword's point, as it were, is like a man that is stung by a bee, and being thereby put in a passion, runs headlong upon the whole hive in order to be revenged, by turning it upside down. Had he not better have borne it, than feel the smart which must attend an attempt so rash? The fire of malicious tongues

burns the more fiercely when we seek to quench it by too hasty efforts.

A tongue that is set on fire of hell, is like that serpent, which, as some tell us, brings forth seven other heads when, in order to destroy it, you cut off one. Thus a wicked tongue is so far from being restrained by contradiction, that it spreads the farther by it, and broaches seven lies instead of one. Whereas he that is deaf to popular rumours, and is not easily alarmed at every little noise, will not only better repel the darts of wicked tongues, but enjoy also an unshaken tranquillity both of soul and body, as the sweet reward, usually attendant on a submissive and patient frame of mind. This is a truly noble and magnanimous method to overcome the worst of enemies, and to gain a full conquest at last over the most stubborn and untractable temper. He that rejects this heroic meekness of soul, sets himself entirely out of God's protection, and whilst he eagerly endeavours to save his name and reputation, must be the more harrassed by the perpetual alarms of malignant tongues.

Besides this, there are some other particular reasons, why the Lord permits his children to be insulted by virulent tongues. When David in his sore troubles was cursed by Shimei, one of the basest of men, he said no more than, "Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him."* And what other reason can be assigned for this, but that the Lord hereby seeks to preserve his children from exalting themselves above measure, on account of such eminent gifts as have been conferred upon them; and that they may at the same time improve themselves in the practice of

* 2 Sam. xvi. 11.

mutual love, mildness and humility, even as the Gospel requires? What is said by David of Shimei, that he was bidden to curse his king, is expressed by Job in more general terms: "He poureth contempt upon princes."* And who is able to fathom all the mysterious depths of divine judgments? The carnal mind by no means likes to be reviled, insulted, or under-valued. Pride and self-love so naturally adhere to us, that they taint all our works and actions. Every one aspires after greatness and dignities, titles and preferments. Every one loves to be extolled, and to be made much of, to be esteemed and admired. Alas! it is this self-conceit, this natural self-love, which having once besotted mankind, now propagates nothing but error and folly in the world. It was this self-love that ruined both Lucifer and Adam, and stripped them of the divine love and life with which they were once adorned.

In order that we may obtain the victory over this spirit of self-love, which continually alarms the soul, and with a view to facilitate this conquest, the Lord thinks as it were with himself: "I will permit a virulent lying tongue to insult such a one, as I formerly permitted Satan to infest my servants Job and Paul, for their greater humiliation. This slandering tongue shall be his devil, his scourge, his plague, to buffet him,† and help to beat down that proud heart, that haughty look, that aspiring temper, which, without this curb, would at last carry all before it." Thus the Lord leaves nothing untried to accustom the soul to that excellent spirit of humility, and to restrain the spirit of self-love,

* Job, xii. 21. † 2 Cor. xii. 7.

by which men become allies to Lucifer, who, endeavouring to have a will of his own, opposite to that of his Maker, entirely lost his principality, and that original state in which he was at first created.*

Therefore, as the Lord is faithful on his side, and has no pleasure in the destruction of his creatures; so he seeks also to convert the venom of impious tongues thrown upon his children, into a precious medicine, by which to heal that self-love which is fostered within, and which engenders abundance of other spiritual diseases in the mind. When the world meditates evil against them, then God brings good out of the evil, an art which is known only by God. As out of the most poisonous serpent an antidote is prepared against poison itself; so God over-rules the worst of counsels, and makes them turn to the greatest good to his children. Thus, "out of the eater comes forth meat," and out of the bitter, sweetness; all things being made to "work together for good to them that love God."† They are taught thereby to practise one of the noblest of the works of charity, which is, to "bless their enemies, and to pray for them who despitefully use them."‡

He that has thus far gained the conquest over corrupt nature, so as to pray heartily for his enemies, is, methinks, almost arrived to the sublimest degree of true evangelical charity, which alone is able to soften our stubborn hearts into the mild and compassionate heart of Christ, who has also set us a blessed pattern to follow: "Father!" said he, "forgive them; for they know not what

* Jude, ver. 6. † Rom. viii. 28. ‡ Matt. v. 44.

they do."* With this tender and sympathizing heart a Christian must be endued, if ever he wish to be in a condition to pray for his enemies. Wherever true love is rooted in a soul, it will most certainly produce a tender commiseration towards enemies; who at the same time, whilst they hate men, render themselves entirely unfit for any communion with God and Christ, and give up their hearts to the devil, that great hater of souls. And this should influence every Christian to commiserate the fate of such profligate wretches, who are not of God, but of their father the devil: and lest they should for ever sink into the jaws of Satan, who inspires them here with hatred and malice, the Lord commands his children to pray for them, with this motive annexed to the command; "That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven."†

What has been said of the over-ruling power of God, whereby he converts the venom of lying tongues into a healing medicine, will more fully appear from the following instances. Joseph would never have been exalted to the dignity of Ruler over the land of Egypt, had he not fallen under the malicious lashes of a wanton tongue, and thereby been condemned to prison.‡ Had Moses not been persecuted by the violent accusations of his enemies, and obliged to flee from the face of Pharaoh,‖ he had never seen the Lord in the bush, after having led Jethro's flock to the backside of the desert.§ Thus did the spiteful tongue of Doeg the Edomite, and of other enemies of David,¶ force many a comfortable Psalm from the latter, now left upon record for the

* Luke, xxiii, 34. † Matt. v. 45. ‡ Gen. xxxix.
‖ Exod. ii. 15. § Exod. iii. 2. ¶ 1 Sam. xxii. 9.

support of the Church in troubles and trials.* The same over-ruling wisdom of God appeared for Daniel, when, by the virulence of his accusers, he was cast into the den of lions, but was most triumphantly exalted again by divine Providence, for many good and noble ends; his enemies themselves being made to lay the foundation of his rise and greatness.† Mordecai had almost the same providence. His ruin was devised by the murderous tongue of proud Haman;‡ but the Lord returned his wickedness upon his own head, and his bloody machinations only hastened the destruction of their contriver.‖

Therefore, "commit thy way unto the Lord: trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day."§ Only endeavour to be in constant amity with the Lord thy God, and to love him with all thy heart, and then he will direct thy steps. For "when a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him."¶ If the world be permitted to stain thy reputation here, and to detract from thy honour, what matters it, provided the Lord dignify thee with a crown of glory hereafter? It is he that will deliver and honour thee at last;** and it is he that will give thee both grace here, and glory hereafter.††

Another comfort in trials of this nature, may be drawn from the powerful influence which the Lord has over the hearts of all men. It is he that "looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth, from the place of his habitation." He "alone

* Psalm, lii. † Dan. vi. ‡ Esther, iii. 6.
‖ Esther, vii. 10. § Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6. ¶ Prov. xvi. 7.
** Ps. xci. 15. †† Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

fashioneth," or frameth "their hearts, and considereth all their works;"* and he "will not deliver thee unto the will of thine enemies."† A man is often transported with rage and malice to such a degree, that he would bear down all that comes in his way; but a little while after, you will find, that by an unexpected turn of Providence, the man is altogether cooled; his heat is allayed, and he is reduced to such a moderation of temper, as if he were become quite another man. Nay, how often do we see, that the most profligate wretch, designing nothing but spite and malice against a good soul, is stopped in the midst of his passionate pursuit, and with a sweet force and holy violence, as it were, obliged not only to drop his wicked design, but to bestow tokens of favour upon the person whom he was about to affront. This, certainly, is an operation peculiar to the wisdom of God, who, by his secret power, often renders abortive the most malicious projects conceived against his children. Thus the Lord came to Laban, when incensed against Jacob, and ordered him to "speak not to him, either good or bad."‡ And Esau, who bore his brother no good-will at all, when he came within sight of him, must needs run and meet him, embrace him, fall on his neck, kiss him, weep over him, and receive him with the most endearing expressions of love and kindness.‖

It is the nature of a malignant tongue, to swell high suddenly, and by rage and fury to gain universal applause and admiration; but its downfall is as sudden as its rise. Calumny is like a fire, the flame of which mounts up to the very

* Psalm, xxxiii. 14, 15.
† Psalm, xli. 2.
‡ Gen. xxxi. 24.
‖ Gen. xxxiii. 4.

sky; but the want of fuel will soon make it go down again. The reason is, because God, who is the everlasting Truth, hates a spirit of lies beyond all things. And this is also the reason, why those that have raised their greatness on no other foundation than lying and self-conceit, may indeed dazzle the eyes of others for a-while; but when they flatter themselves as fixed in an unshaken condition, then generally their ruin is ready at hand, and the Lord's judgment destroys all. Then "the lying lips are put to silence, which spoke grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous;"* a text which plainly shows, that pride, and disdain of others, are wont to accompany a slandering and lying tongue. But "woe unto thee that dealest treacherously; when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee."† "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity."‡ Though a treacherous man may go on in quest of more honour and greatness; yet shall "evil hunt the violent man at last, and overthrow him."‖

For a fuller explanation of what has been said on this head, consider the following Psalms of David. Psalm iii. iv. v. vi. vii. xvii. xviii. xxvii. xxxi. xxxv. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix. lv. lvii. lxiv. lxxi. cxxi. cxl. cxlii.

* Psalm, xxxi. 18.
† Isaiah, xxxiii. 1.
‡ Psalm, cxxv. 3.
‖ Psalm, cxl. 11.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Consideration of the Sufferings and Sorrows of Christ, is the most effectual method of subduing carnal delights.

THE third branch of the crosses and afflictions of Christ, consists in that unspeakable grief and sorrow which he underwent, even from his infancy. For as his most holy soul, by virtue of the hypostatical union, was replenished with the light of divine knowledge and wisdom, by which he perpetually beheld what should befal him, as if it were already present; he must even from his first breath, have endured the greatest grief and anxiety of mind. For the torments of soul and body which he foresaw, proved astonishing and grievous beyond expression. The more delicate, pure, and innocent, the human nature in Christ was, the greater must have been the pain and anguish that affected him. Of this those sorrows and spiritual torments, that are wont to work upon the inmost soul, are a sufficient proof. For inasmuch as the constitution of the soul, by reason of its immortality, exceeds that of the body in worth and delicacy; so also her pains exceed those of the body in depth and acuteness. For this reason the Lord never rejoiced upon his own account, and with reference only to himself; but it was when he saw that his heavenly Father was known and worshipped, and his divine works manifested unto the world. Hence we read, that

he rejoiced in spirit at the return of the seventy disciples.*

Since not any of all these things, which he was to suffer, were unknown to him, even from his own people and countrymen, he could not but be highly afflicted with the anticipation of them; and this was also still more and more aggravated, the more nearly he approached the time appointed for his passion. This he himself testifies, saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"† And the time of this baptism being come, he says, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:"‡ intimating thereby the excessive and unutterable grief and anguish of spirit, that forced from him that sweat, which, like drops of blood, fell down to the ground in his agony.‖ And what pains he suffered besides, in his tender and sensible body, no tongue, no eloquence of men, can sufficiently declare.

This greatness of torment was caused, *first*, by the greatness of sin; which being an infinite and inexpressible evil, its full punishment and atonement could not but cause torment so exquisite, that to a mere man it had been altogether insupportable.

The *second* reason of this exquisite grief was, because he bore the sins of the world: not merely those sins which from the beginning had been committed, but those also which men should become guilty of through all ages, down to the very end of the world. And, therefore, such as are the number and malignity of *all* sins, of *all* men, through *all* generations; such must have been

* Luke, x. 21.
† Luke, xii. 50.
‡ Matt. xxvi. 38.
‖ Luke, xxii. 44.

also the pain and sorrow endured by the Lord. For which cause he prayed on the Mount of Olives, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."*

Thirdly, the torments of Christ were not a little heightened by that perfect love which he bore to his heavenly Father. The greater our love is, the greater is also the grief occasioned by what interferes with it: as on the contrary, the less it is, the less are we troubled by that which thwarts it. Since, therefore, Christ loved his heavenly Father with most exalted and consummate love; his affliction must needs have been exceedingly grievous, on account of the heinousness of sin, with which fallen men so shamefully insulted so dear and beloved a Father. Hence the sins of the whole world, with the pains he endured for them, did not so much affect him, as the sorrow he felt on account of the indignity offered to a God, who in his very nature is love and kindness. And surely it was upon account of this love to the Father, (which deserved all the returns of love the creature was able to make), that Christ sustained most exquisite pains, and a most ignominious death; *viz.* that by a satisfaction proportionable to the offence, he might regain for wretched mortals, that love and favour of God, which they, by heinous apostasy, had forfeited in Adam.

In the *fourth* place, the suffering of Christ was increased by his perfect love to mankind. For as he died for all, and bore the sins of all, so also was he exceedingly desirous to see the object of his death accomplished, which is the salvation of all men. Hence the unbelief and wickedness

* Matt. xxvi. 39.

of men, which every where overflowed the world, and hindered this love from taking effect upon sinners, caused him most grievous and bitter torments: but especially was he affected with such as by their profligate lives and lasting impenitence, threw away their souls for a handful of lust and vanity. Not to mention that cruel hatred and envy, wrath and blasphemy, by which some were hurried on, even to trample on that blood which was designed to save them. He himself says, "reproach hath broken his heart;"* lamenting not so much his own, as the condition of them who reproached them in so heinous a manner.

Fifthly, another circumstance which pierced to the very heart of our Lord, was his being forsaken of God, notwithstanding he was the Son of God himself. For though it is true, that God could not forsake him, who himself was God, and who did not cease to be God even when he hung on the cross, when he expired, and when he was buried; yet does he complain of being forsaken by him.† And this lamentable complaint the Lord poured out, in order to shew that God withdrew from him, as a man, the support of his comfort, hiding himself for a while in this dark hour of temptation. He manifests also, by this exclamation, the extreme misery in which he then was.

The *sixth* aggravation of the anguish of Christ, was the consideration of the dignity of his person. He was very God. Whence it is plain, that all the reproaches and blasphemies uttered against him, were an infinite evil, as being directed against the entire person of Christ, who was true God and man; and so he endured, both as God

* Psalm, lxix. 20. † Psalm, xxii. 1.

and man, the revilings of his enemies in his whole person. All which undoubtedly left a most exquisite impression of sorrow upon his soul.

And who, in the *seventh* place, is able sufficiently to explain what pains the Lord suffered in his most innocent, most holy, most tender, and delicate *body?* Or who can doubt, that a body most innocent, most delicate, most noble, most pure, conceived by the Holy Ghost, personally united with the divine nature, filled with the Spirit of God, and with all the fulness of the Godhead; I say, that such a body should not feel most grievous and bitter pains, when smitten, scourged, wounded, pierced, crucified, and put to death? No words are sufficiently expressive to set forth the pain and acuteness thereof. What is all our affliction, if compared with this suffering of the Lord? We, as sinners, have justly deserved eternal death and damnation; and yet even the smallest cross is too heavy a burden for our tender Christians, who do what they can to shake it off, though it is designed as wholesome medicine, to procure the health of the soul. Surely, he who is a sincere lover of Christ, can wish no other condition of life, but such as comes up nearest to the original of the blessed life of Christ.* This conformity of our lives to the life of Christ, we ought to account our greatest gain and dignity in this world. Let the true lover of Christ rejoice in this, that he has been thought worthy to suffer with Christ, his Head and Saviour.

Since, then, affliction is likely to be the constant companion of a Christian in his way to heaven, or to use the Apostle's phrase, since he

* 1 Peter, ii. 21.

must, "through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God;"* what cause can we assign, why we should not most willingly step over into this path of the holy cross? especially as we know the Son of God himself travelled this way before us, and by his holy example sanctified it, not having "entered into his glory but by sufferings?"† And since, notwithstanding all the insults of the enemy, he has entered into glory at last; we may also assure ourselves, that our affliction, which is but for a moment, shall be followed in the end, by an everlasting weight of glory and happiness.‡ In fine, as the Lord did not spare himself, but laid himself entirely out for the service of others, undergoing all from no other impulse but fervent love and charity; so this love of our Redeemer should raise reciprocal flames of love in our souls, and never should we grow faint and weary under any affliction whatever.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of Christ crucified.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED is set before our eyes as a Book of Life, whence we may learn the sacred wisdom of God, which is therein eminently displayed. In him the whole Scripture, the Law, and all the Prophets, are completely fulfilled, *viz.* by his most perfect obedience, wherein he

* Acts, xiv. 22. † Luke, xxiv. 26. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

was faithful even unto death, and suffered the most cruel torments for the sins of the world. And "this perfect internal and external obedience and suffering, is that Book of Life written within and without."*

In the first place, the Crucified Jesus presents us with a deplorable sight of our sins, both as to their number and heinousness. By the lamentable complaint into which he burst forth, he manifested that inward anguish of soul, which he suffered for the hidden and more secret sins of our hearts. In his wounded and mangled body, dyed in crimson gore, and bleeding on the cross, he leads us to behold, and read, as in a book, the malignity of those sins which we have committed by all our members, in having yielded them up to the government of lust and carnal concupiscence.

Besides this, the devout soul may behold in Christ Crucified, the justice of God in judging sinners. There was no other means by which to remove both our sin and the punishment attending it, than this high atonement made by the Lord himself. And hence we may certainly infer, that God is so far from letting any sin go unpunished, that he will rather deliver up his most beloved Son unto death, than connive at the transgression of a sinner.†

Hence the soul may go on to contemplate the infinite love and condescending mercy of the heavenly Father, most wonderfully displayed in our Crucified Saviour. Rather than we should for ever perish in our wretched state, and be bound over to eternal death and damnation, he would have his own Son make satisfaction for us; which we ourselves, yea, and all the other creatures besides, had never been able to perform.

* Rev. v. 1. † Rom. iv. 25.

The contemplation of Christ Crucified will, in the next place, lead us to a sight of the most gracious will, providence, and fatherly care of God, as it respects the recovery of lost mankind. No opposition was so great, no difficulty so stubborn and obstinate, which he did not conquer by his beloved Son, the restorer of our salvation. That we might inherit everlasting joy, he left nothing untried, nor did he spare even his own Son.

In the same Book of Life, (the *Crucified Jesus*) appears most plainly the infinite wisdom of God in finding out a means of salvation, such as could never have entered into the thoughts of any creature whatever. It was not only consistent with, but even highly calculated to illustrate, both the justice and mercy of God. For the work of our salvation was so wisely ordered, that by manifesting the infinite mercy of God, his justice was not at all infringed; as on the other hand, Christ by his death has so atoned for sin, that in satisfying the rigour of divine justice, his infinite mercy is rendered more bright and conspicuous. And as by eating of the forbidden tree, the first Adam* brought us under the curse; so God in his marvellous wisdom has, by the tree of the cross, taken away the curse, and revived his blessing. Yea, by the unsearchable counsel of the divine wisdom, it is so brought about, that through the death of Christ, all things detained under the power of death, are restored to life again. death itself being destroyed at last. By his pains and torments is purchased for us eternal pleasure in heaven; by his griefs and sorrows are gained joys celestial without end. And by this wonderful work of God, though foolish in the eye of the

* Gen. iii. 1.

world, he hath confounded the wisdom of the wise; and by the foolishness of God,* he has manifested a wisdom altogether unfathomable to men.

In Christ Crucified farther appears the brightest and fairest pattern of patience and meekness that was ever seen. So far was he from revenging the injuries done him, that he made intercession to his Father for his revilers, yea, even laid down his life for the sins of those who plotted to take it away. Not to mention his most astonishing humility, wherein he was so eminent, that he readily underwent the most ignominious death of the cross. Thus are the death and passion of Christ become to a faithful soul, redemption from hell, an inlet into paradise, a complete reconciliation with God, a victory over the devil, that great enemy of souls; a full satisfaction for sins, and in one word, an entire recovery of that original righteousness which was lost in the fall.

By all this, it sufficiently appears to a Christian soul, that Christ Crucified is indeed a Book of Life, teaching nothing but the eternal and infallible truths of God. Let us then silently sit down at the feet of our Crucified Lord, who, as the great Teacher of souls, and Book of Life, will not neglect to instil into a humble heart, the lesson of a living faith, and of a holy life consequent on it; provided we desire to be not dead, but living members of his spiritual body, which being planted in his life and death, ought to bring forth suitable fruits of righteousness.

* 1 Cor. i. 25.

CHAPTER XX.

Of the power and necessity of Prayer.

SINCE the living knowledge of God and of Christ crucified, is not to be attained, unless we keep our eye constantly fixed upon the innocent and holy Life of Jesus Christ our Lord; and since we cannot arrive to this elevation of mind, but by devout, humble, fervent, and earnest prayer; it is, therefore, highly necessary to make some further enquiry into the nature of prayer, which consists not so much in an utterance of fine words, as in a meditation or sweet intercourse of the heart with God, and in a lifting up of the soul, and of all her faculties and powers to our heavenly Father.* As it is impossible to find God without prayer; so prayer is the ordinary means appointed for seeking and finding him. And as it falls under a threefold denomination, it being either *oral, internal,* or *supernatural;*† (according to that of St. Paul: "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also;")‡ so we shall now consider each of these in order.

Oral prayer is an humble address to God, and an external exercise, which uses the soul gradually to the internal duty of prayer, and leads man into the interior recesses of his own heart; especially if the words uttered be digested in faith, and if by attentive application they be well pondered and considered. This often proves a

* Psalm, xix. 14.—xxv. 1. † Matt. vii. 7. ‡ 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

means of elevating the spirit and soul so near unto God, as to enjoy sweet and filial conference with him, our heavenly Father.

Internal prayer is offered up without intermission, in faith, spirit, and mind, according to that of our Saviour: "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."* And that of David: "Let the meditation of my heart, says he, be ever before thee."† And again: "I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search."‡ Hereby, says St. Paul, (speaking of the spirit of adoption,) we cry, Abba, Father.‖ By this internal prayer, we are led on gradually to that which is *supernatural;* and, which according to Tauler, "consists in a true union with God by faith; when our created spirit dissolves, as it were, and sinks away in the uncreated spirit of God. It is then that all is transacted in a moment, which in words or deeds has been done and declared by all the saints from the beginning of the world." For this reason this supernatural prayer is unspeakably more excellent than that which is chiefly external; for therein the soul is by true faith so replenished with the divine love, that it can think of nothing else but of God only. Or if another thought should slide inadvertently into the heart, it proves but an occasion of trouble and sorrow; and the soul cannot be at ease, till the intruding thought has again vanished.

A soul that has once arrived at this happy state, gives but little or no employment to the tongue: It is silent to the Lord:§ It panteth and thirsteth after God:¶ It longeth, yea, even fainteth for

* John, iv. 23. † Psalm, xix. 14. ‡ Psalm, lxxvii. 6.
‖ Rom. viii. 15. § Psalm, xxxvii. 7. ¶ Psalm, xlii. 1, 2.

him:* It loves him only, it rests in him alone, not at all minding the world, nor worldly affairs. Whence it is still more and more filled with an experimental knowledge of God, and with such love and joy as no tongue is able to utter. Whatever the soul then perceives, is beyond all possibility of being explained by words. If one should ask a soul under these contemplations, *what she thinks of, or what she perceives?* she would certainly answer: A good that is above all good. *What seest thou?* A perfection of beauty transcending all created forms. *What feelest thou?* A joy surpassing all joys. *What dost thou taste?* The inexpressible delight of love. Nay, such a one would tell you, that all the words that possibly could be framed, were but a shadow, and came infinitely short of the precious power which was infinitely felt and suffered; nothing but the actual feeling itself being capable of giving a just impression thereof. This is the voice of the eternal Word; this His speech to a loving soul; according to that of the Lord: "He that loveth me, I will manifest myself unto him."† To conclude, whatever is felt here, whatever is seen here, is above nature. Here voices are heard, and words perceived that are unspeakable, nor is it possible for a man to utter them.

This is the school, in which the soul learns to know God aright, and as it were, to taste him.‡ Whilst she knows him, she loves him; and whilst she loves him, she affectionately longs for a *total* enjoyment of him. This is a most certain sign of love, to desire wholly to possess the beloved object, to be intimately united with, and alto-

* Psalm, lxiii. 1.—lxxxiv. 2. † John, xiv. 21.
‡ Ps. xxxiv. 8.

gether transformed into it. This the soul now and then perceives in a glance, which lasts but for a moment, and then vanishes again; but it puts the soul upon fervent desires, to recover, if possible, that beam of heavenly joy which darted upon her, and to regain this divine taste, which so lovingly moved here. And she desires all this, in order to be more inseparably united to her beloved.

From this affectionate desire spring up both mental and oral prayer; the soul being fully convinced that these heavenly pleasures and visitations are to be attained only by prayer. And in all this, the wonderful wisdom of God appears, by which every thing is managed in order and harmony, and the soul is led up by a gradual ascent to the enjoyment of the highest and sovereign good. Thus none is permitted to attain unto *mental* prayer, but he who begins with that which is *vocal*, and endeavours to kindle the fire of secret internal prayer by some external act of devotion. Again, none must have an access to the *supernatural* prayer, or to a union with the sublimest and most delightful good, but by *mental* prayer. But these things can only be known by an experimental perception, not expressible by words. And this is the true cause, why God so strictly, so frequently, and so earnestly enjoins prayer; because it is a sacred pledge and bond, by which God draws us up to himself; and by elevating us into his immediate presence, detains us there a while, and unites us, as it were, to our first and divine original, which we lost by our heinous apostasy from so endless a good. If this prayer begin to languish at any time, we then lose by little and little, the sweet remembrance of God, and deprive ourselves of those

unspeakable benefits that are wont to flow from his gracious presence.

If, therefore, thou desirest that thy prayer be acceptable to God, see thou perform it not with a half and divided, but with a whole and entire heart. But this is not to be attained, except by frequent exercise, and continual and unwearied application. Without this, thou art never likely to reap the fruits of prayer. On the contrary, as often as thou givest attendance to any external work, take care that thou set not thy heart wholly upon it. If thou eatest and drinkest, or attendest any other outward affair incident to this life, see that thou bestow not thyself, that is, thy whole heart, upon it.* Do it as if thou didst it not. For thy heart is to rest entirely in God alone, and closely to adhere to him by mental and internal prayer. Now this cannot be done except it be set free from the toilsome incumbrances of this world. The more thou offerest up thyself to God by this prayer, the more will the divine light display itself in thine understanding. And again, the more the knowledge of God is enlarged in thy mind, the more endearing will be thy sense and perception of the highest good; the more ardent also and affectionate will be thy love to the Lord; and in fine, the more capable wilt thou be of enjoying him. The soul thus disposed, will in a supernatural manner taste of a happiness so high and transcendent, as infinitely to exceed all the language and and expressions of men.

Of this threefold prayer, Jesus Christ himself has set us a bright and perfect pattern, whence we may learn the nature and method of it, if we but

* Cor. vii. 31.

attentively consider his manner of praying as recorded in history. We find that he often continued whole days and nights in prayer to God.* He prayed with a fervency that made him triumph in prayer, and rejoice in spirit.† He has, therefore, both by example and words taught us the method of praying; and leaving us a pattern to follow, has commanded us to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation.‡ He also most frequently recommends to us the duty of prayer;‖ thereby testifying that nothing was more pleasing, nothing more acceptable to him than our prayer; he having enjoined it for no other reason, than to shew us how entirely he loved us, and how desirous he was, that by prayer we should partake of the highest and most precious good.

Lest, however, we should pretend, that so noble an effect as that which results from a due performance of prayer, was not attainable by us; the Lord did not think it enough to have said, ask, but he has encouraged us also with a promise annexed: "And receive, that your joy may be full."§. He moreover excites us, to pray by his own example, for the most exquisite sufferings did not extinguish, but rather enkindle the more in him the ardour of his devotion: "For being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, drops of blood falling down to the ground."¶ Set, therefore, this mirror of prayer before thine eyes, and study to persevere therein. Whenever thou feelest thyself faint and weak in prayer, then seriously advert to thy Lord Christ, who prayed not for himself, or upon his own account, but for thee and upon thy account, and thus sanctified thy prayer and blessed

* Luke, vi. 12. † Luke, x. 21. ‡ Matt. vi. 9.
‖ Matt. xxvi. 41. § John, xvi. 24. ¶ Luke, xxii. 44.

it, and added life and efficacy to it. Him, therefore, behold, who though he was true God, and consequently in actual possession of all things; yet as man, obtained for thee of his heavenly Father, all things by prayer. And hence as his whole life was a continual and uninterrupted prayer, and a perpetual longing to do the will of God: and this, he finished whilst he was praying upon the cross.*

If then thy Lord and Saviour prayed so fervently upon thy account, and was heard; surely he will not suffer thy prayers to be poured forth in vain. Did he procure all things for thee by prayer, and thinkest thou that thou canst obtain the least blessing without it? And as it is plain, that without divine grace, light, and knowledge, and in fine, without faith, not one can be saved; so it is no less plain, that these and all other graces cannot be obtained but by prayer alone. It is the Lord whom thou must entreat by fervent prayer, to obtain from him faith, love, hope, humility, patience, the Holy Spirit, together with the whole train of gospel virtues, which he is both able and willing to give, as well as to strengthen in thy soul. It is he alone that createth them in the heart. But as he that hath them not, cannot give them; so the Lord, whose gift they are, will not give them without being asked.

If then thou art truly desirous of pouring out thy soul before the Lord in fervency of spirit; believe me, there is not a more ready and effectual means of doing this, than with the eyes of thy mind to behold the mirror of the most meek and humble life of Christ: to keep, I say, thy

* Luke, xxiii. 46.

eyes attentively fixed upon the poverty, the reproach and contempt, the griefs and sorrows, and the most ignominious death of thy blessed Redeemer. Into this Book of Prayer, if thou diligently look, thy heart and mind will become inflamed with most affectionate and ardent desires. And though the devil and the flesh will not cease to assault thee with temptations on all hands; yet, by means of prayer, they shall be subdued at last. Nor is the duty of prayer only stirred up and revived by the contemplation of Christ crucified, but the heart is also cleansed thereby. Without this purification of the heart by faith, our prayers will prove altogether ineffectual in the sight of God: whereas, after a sincere application to the Lord by prayer, the Spirit of God is wont to visit the heart with his gracious presence, as he descended upon the Apostles, even then, when they were with one accord praying at Pentecost.*

With reference to the temptations that are wont to attend the duty of prayer, thou must behave thyself under them as the Lord himself did. In the midst of the agony which he suffered on Mount Olivet, "he prayed the more earnestly."† Thus thy prayer shall prove at last the victory over all thy enemies. By prayer the Lord manifests himself unto his children. By prayer we learn to practise true humility; for it is by prayer the highest is united to the lowest; the most high God to the most humble heart. And this humility is the very inlet, through which abundance of divine grace is infused into the soul. The more this grace humbles man, the more grace itself gets rooted in the soul. And again,

* Acts, ii. 1. † Luke, xxii. 44.

the more a soul is enriched with grace, the more she improves in humility.

The most considerable temptation and obstruction in prayer seems to be, when God withdraws the grace of a fervent and lively devotion. And yet it is in this case, that we ought the more to stir ourselves up to prayer and supplication. It is true, a prayer poured forth in a spirit of power and fervency, must needs be acceptable to God; yet that which climbs up to the throne of grace in affliction, temptation, spiritual dryness, and brokenness of soul, is still more pleasing in his sight. For as the heart of a father is sooner softened into a paternal tenderness, by the trembling words of a sick and languishing child, than by the strong voice of one in perfect health; so is the secret affliction, and feeble effort of a soul affected with a sense of her weakness in faith, of her poverty in spirit, and of her want of spiritual life and comfort, far more acceptable to our infinitely good God, than the more vigorous petition of a soul elevated by a sense of faith and divine consolation. Only hold out patiently in these spiritual straits, and depend upon it, that the Lord, in his own time, will certainly "restore unto thee the joy of his salvation."*

* Psalm, li. 12.

A

PRAYER

FOR

TRUE CONVERSION.

MOST merciful Father, it is in great weakness I lift up my heart unto thee, and return thee humble thanks for thy heavenly convictions, with which thou hast been pleased to visit my soul, making me sensible both of my degenerate state by sin, and of my glorious descent, so shamefully forfeited. By this thy divine visitation, I begin to see, that I am the lost sheep, which is far gone astray from thy flock, and which is quite benighted in the howling wilderness of the world.* I begin to perceive that I am that prodigal son, who has wasted his substance with riotous living, and after having left his own home, has taken his journey into a far country.† I am that worldly man, who at least in his mind and desires hath laid up the goods of this world for many years;‡ disquieting myself in vain, and walking in the image of my own heart.‖

I have long slept in a state of carnal security, and in this deplorable condition have busied my-

* Luke, xv. 7. † Luke, xv. 12, 13. ‡ Luke, xii. 16.
‖ Psalm, xxxix. 6.

self with nothing but shadows and images of things destitute of life and virtue. I am that unfaithful steward, that has spent his Lord's goods, and never thought of the account he is to give of his trust and stewardship.* I am one of those that have been standing idle in the market-place of a vain and careless world, and have never minded the call to go and work in thy vineyard.†

Thus is my soul corrupted by sin and error. I have refused to be digged by thy law, and to be watered by thy Gospel. I have rendered fruitless the seed of thy word, which should have begotten me again unto a lively hope; and have resisted the motions of thy good Spirit, which would have recovered me into an unfeigned sense of repentance. And this is the reason why my vineyard is now turned into a desart, and that it has all along brought forth nothing but the thorns of worldly cares and pleasures, and the wild grapes of false Christianity.

Look down, most gracious God, with an eye of pity upon this my condition, and let the great restorer of our breaches, under the dispensation of thy Gospel, continue the work which thou hast begun under the operation of thy law. I hear, though at a great distance, the call of my Shepherd, who hath followed me wherever I have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day of my sin and apostasy.‡ O let me not only hear his voice, but follow it also; never minding again the voice of strangers, who rule thy flock with the cruelty of heavy burdens and a multitude of legal duties, but do not lead them to the fat

* Luke, xvi. 2. † Matt. xx. 3. ‡ Ezek. xxxiv. 12.

pasture of thy love, nor to the rivers of thy evangelical promises.

I begin to feel, with the prodigal son, the spiritual famine which overspreads all the faculties of my soul; but I am so poor in spirit, and so destitute of life, that I do not find strength enough to carry me back. My own reason torments me with abundance of dangerous suggestions. At one time I think I am got too far from my heavenly home, and that it would be a vain attempt to venture on my return: at another, I am quite cast down with shame and confusion, when I remember what a noble portion of goods was allotted me at my first setting out, and what I am reduced to at present! I am entirely stripped of that garment of original righteousness with which I was at first adorned. I have neglected the light of thy countenance, the guidance of thy counsel, the still voice of thy Spirit, whereby I might have been guided into the path of life, and led back to my heavenly country. I have hardened myself against the sweet precepts of thy love, and submitted to the tyrannical commands of sin, which, like an Egyptian task-master, lays unmerciful burdens upon me. I have forfeited the true freedom of mind, and the sovereign liberty of spirit, and am brought by sin into straitness, bondage, and slavery.

Of all this, most merciful Father, I am now sensible. And though I find some weak efforts, desires, and longings, to regain my first glory and liberty; yet, in the midst of my efforts, I sink down again into mire and misery, where there is no standing. I feel a ray of thy divine light shining forth upon my darkness, and see a dawning of the day of salvation in the night of my corruption; yet since I have all along loved

darkness rather than light,* I cannot now cast off the works of darkness as freely as I wish; nor put on the armour of light, to break the tyranny of sin. I feel the healing power the Sun of Righteousness carries in his wings;† but the diseases of my soul are so various, so deep and infectious, that I do not know where to begin the cure.

In this my deplorable condition, let thy grace, O Lord, appear for my deliverance, and draw me to thy Son,‡ the true Redeemer of those that groan under their bondage; the Light of those that are sensible of their darkness, and the Physician of all such as, feeling their original disease, seek for a remedy. Let his blood cleanse and heal me;‖ let his Spirit renew and comfort me;§ let his love constrain and chasten me;¶ let his grace support and establish me;** let his promises purify and perfect me!†† Let my faith at last victoriously triumph over the malignity of sin, and over all the combined powers of hell and darkness, through him that loved me! Amen.

* John, iii. 19. † Mal. iv. 2. ‡ John, vi. 44.
‖ 1 John, i. 7. § John, xv. 26. ¶ 2 Cor. v. 14.
** Heb. xiii. 9. †† 2 Cor. vii. 1.

ASPIRATIONS.

LET that powerful Word, O Lord! whereby thou didst create the first world, create in me also a clean heart, and renew a firm and ready Spirit within me.*

2. Let me overcome, by the power of the Divine Nature, the bent and propensities of my sinful nature. Teach me, that my restoration by grace in Christ, is far more powerful than the abasement by sin in Adam.

3. O how sweet, how easy, how happy, is "the perfect law of thy liberty!"† O Lord! sin has brought me under a shameful bondage; but thy Son restores unto me the true freedom of Spirit, and then I "am free indeed!"‡ Free with the noblest and most excellent freedom: free from all the ties of lust and corruption: free from the hurry of self-will: free from the vain pursuit after worldly honour and greatness: free from the thirst after carnal pleasures: free from covetousness: free from wrath and bitterness. This freedom is freedom indeed, and the character of a heaven-born spirit!

Teach me, O Lord, this great truth, that no man can do any good, except he be first made good within: no corrupt tree being able to bring forth any fruit that may be accounted good in

* Psalm, li. 10. † James, i. 25. ‡ John, viii. 36.

thy sight.* This consideration will lay me very low, and make me look with a holy disdain on all such works as I have done under the impulse of an unregenerate heart.

Alas! how wearisome are these steps, whereby the soul, under the rigour of thy law, returns out of the snares of the love of the world into the path of the love of God. Support me, O Lord! by thy grace, and uphold me by thy Spirit, till my faith prove the "victory that overcometh the world."†

* Matt. vii. 18. † 1 John, v. 4.

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